





LETTERS FROM ITALY

TO

A YOUNGER SISTER :

BY

CATHARINE TAYLOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

“ Da barbarica man percossa e vinta,
Cadde in sè stessa, e fra ruine e morti
In sè medesima poi sepolta giacque.
..... Indi risorse
Più bella agli occhi della mente interna,
E maggior di sè stessa, anzi del mondo.”

Tasso.

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P R E F A C E .

IN the Preface to the former volume of these Letters I explained the reasons which had induced me to revise them with a view to publication ; it is therefore unnecessary for me to repeat them here. The kind manner in which my book was received gave me encouragement to proceed in a task so agreeable to myself ; and in the present volume I have completed the narrative of my journey through Italy.

I have taken as my principal authorities, in the historical sketches, Gibbon, Sismondi, Hallam and Roscoe, and have derived much information from Botta, Valery, and other writers mentioned in the following pages. Had this work not been intended for young persons, these details would have been suppressed as unnecessary. In subjects connected with art, I am indebted chiefly to the

works of Vasari, Lanzi, Reynolds, Fuseli and Kugler*. My desire has been to blend the amusement of a personal narrative with an interest of a more important nature, and it has afforded me sincere pleasure to know that in following this design I have not been altogether unsuccessful.

I am well aware that my acquaintance with the deeper principles of art is too insufficient to justify my stating the impressions made upon my own mind by the sight of paintings and statues as opinions; nevertheless, I have thought it better simply to narrate these as they were called forth. To have merely adopted the opinions of critics far better qualified to decide upon the merits of works of art, as my own, where I have not been able to feel their truth, would have been insincere; and to have given my own ideas with an air of authority would have been as unbecoming.

Here I wish to advert to one point, which seems to me important in any attempt to present art as a study to the young. The true way, I believe, to teach a mind to judge and to appreciate cor-

* A translation of Kugler's excellent Hand-book of Painting will soon be given to the English student; I have to acknowledge my obligation to Mr. Murray for allowing me a perusal of the work as it is passing through the press.

rectly, is not so much to dictate to it what it has to admire, as to point out what it ought to seek. To create a love for that which is beautiful and true, is to lead the mind to seek within itself the exercise of its own judgement, and no admiration can be genuine which does not spring from self-conviction. The mere enthusiasm of a quick imagination is liable to be easily led astray ; the formation of *opinions* can only rest upon the exercise of the powers of the mind properly disciplined by study and reflection.

I cannot dismiss my little work without acknowledging the kind assistance I have received in bringing it to a conclusion. In all points on which I have distrusted my own judgement, I have found friends able and willing to lend me their assistance, and to confirm or to correct the results of my own impressions*. I venture to repeat my hope, that what I have written may prove useful as well as entertaining to that class of

* I refrain from saying more, as feelings of a personal nature ought to be private. Many of the notes and translations have been contributed by my brother ; I have also had occasion to acknowledge the kind assistance of my aunt, Mrs. Austin, whose encouragement in the prosecution of my task is a privilege of which I can well estimate the value.

readers for whom it is especially designed, and that those young friends who have accompanied me in this tour through Italy, will have found sufficient inducement from reading these pages to prosecute further the subjects of inquiry which they may have suggested. Thus will my journey have proved not only the source of delightful recollections and self-gratification, but it will have yielded the sweeter fruits which spring from an endeavour to impart the advantages which I have enjoyed.

C. T.

London, May 20th, 1841.

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LETTERS FROM ITALY.

LETTER I.

Mola di Gaëta, February 4th.

WE have turned our backs upon Rome, and, need I add, with reluctance; my letters, if they have effected their intention, will have made you feel how deep an interest this city has awakened in me, and you will readily understand the sorrow with which I left a place endeared to us by so many delightful associations. Even the thought that Naples was before us could not rouse me, and the charm which new and untried adventures have for all failed for some time to abate my regret. The morning of our departure, however, was bright and cloudless; and after we had passed

the Coliseum, and the city was left far behind, the beauty of the scene, the calm loveliness of the day, the sweet balmy air of the Campagna, all contributed to banish sadness. To me there is a pleasure in the very act of travelling; the easy and rapid motion of the carriage, the constant change of scene, the fresh breeze which meets you when whirled swiftly along, keep the mind in a state of excitement which is inexpressibly delightful. Then in a long journey the carriage becomes a kind of home; employments are invented to pass away the hours of the long days, and books and work fill up the time which might otherwise hang heavily; for even in Italy there must be many days of journeying through dull uninteresting country.

The road from Rome to Naples offers much to interest the traveller, and our books were seldom in requisition during the three days which the journey hither occupied. It is true, on the second day we had to cross the Pontine Marshes—an interminably long straight road, across a wearisome and desolate waste; but Terracina, with its mountains, and the beautiful Mediterranean succeeded, and the marshes were soon left behind and forgotten. Not however to begin at the end of our journey, you must travel with me through Albano to Velletri. The present season was unfavourable

for visiting the former beautifully-situated town, and we passed on without delay to Velletri, where we rested for the night. The country between these two places is in parts very fine; the woods of Aricia are magnificent.

At Velletri, while our dinner was being prepared, we wandered into the town, attracted by the sound of the vesper-bell, and mingled with the crowd that was entering the church. It was a festa day in honour of the Virgin, and the aisles were filled with people, chiefly women; hundreds were kneeling on the pavement before a side altar, whilst many walked about in listless indifference, or stood in groups, earnestly engaged in conversation. Here I first acknowledged the full power of Italian beauty: the women of Velletri are celebrated for their loveliness, and I esteem myself fortunate to have seen them under such favourable circumstances. Arrayed in their holiday dresses, so beautiful in their brilliant colours and picturesque forms, these graceful creatures, moving about with the dignity of Roman matrons, or bending in adoration before the image of the Madonna, were studies for an artist. As we walked up the aisle, many a bright glance was turned on us; and the half-uttered prayer to the Virgin was suspended, for the gaze and whisper of curiosity and wonder. It was strange to be thus ren-

dered conspicuous by our dress, and to find ourselves objects of no less attention to them than they were to us. We spoke to one or two of these captivating women ; their Italian was unintelligible to us, but their dark eyes beamed with pleasure on being addressed by the *Signore Inglese*.

Let me try to give you an idea of the costume of these beautiful Velletrians ; if I succeed, you will perhaps think that dress had its share in the impression produced. The petticoat was of printed muslin of various colours, of immense widths, with two or three rows of bright satin ribbon round the bottom : the boddice, of scarlet cloth, or in some cases of satin, fitted tightly to the shape, and set off to great advantage the beautifully-moulded figure ; it was laced behind, meeting at the waist, but open at the top for about two inches, betraying a white chemisette : tight sleeves of the same material as the boddice reached to the elbow : the apron was wide, of embroidered muslin and trimmed with lace ; this, and the shawl, likewise of muslin ornamented with rich lace, was as white as snow ; the latter was pinned down to the waist behind, and being drawn up and fastened on each shoulder, the corners were then brought forward and tucked into the stomacher, thus forming hanging epaulettes on the shoulders. The head-gear differed in some de-

gree from that of the Roman women ; the hair was collected behind in a net, which was tied on the top of the head with large bows of broad gay-coloured ribbons ; over this was pinned a white muslin handkerchief or veil, very stiffly starched, which hung below the waist behind. You may conceive what an effect such a picturesque costume would have in enhancing the beauty of these dignified and graceful women, whose noble profiles, dark lustrous eyes, and majestic forms are fixed in my memory.

The second night we reached Mola di Gaëta, having passed the Pontine Marshes, which from time immemorial have spread pestilence and death through the country. Emperors and Popes of Rome have expended immense wealth on the difficult task of draining and purifying these unwholesome swamps ; and although much remains to be done in order to render this tract habitable, yet the injurious effects of its malaria have much decreased.

At Terracina the face of the country changes entirely : here we again come upon the shores of the Mediterranean, its bright blue waters glittering in the sun. How glorious does the ocean seem, when, after months of absence, the eye once more stretches far over its wide and ever-varying surface ! the heart expands with feelings

of wonder and admiration, as its grandeur and beauty burst upon the sight. Terracina stands upon a point of land, backed by precipitous rocks, on which was situated the ancient Roman city of Anxur. The pass of Lautulæ lies beneath, where Fabius successfully resisted the attempt of Hannibal to advance on Rome. The narrow road is hemmed in by the sea on one side, while perpendicular rocks rise on the other.

We now entered the wild mountainous country which extends far to the south of Terracina, and has become famous as the scene of the daring exploits of bands of brigands who infest this region. These attacks have of late years decreased in number, but they are by no means at an end. The police, though more effective than they were some years ago, are either not powerful enough to suppress these fearful gangs, or they are indifferent to their depredations; some are even said to connive at the robberies committed, and quietly to share the booty. One little village called Itri, through which we passed, situated in the very heart of the mountains, is entirely inhabited by brigands. As we stopped to change horses, groups of them assembled to gaze at us. It was a festaday with them, and we saw this lawless people in full costume; their high conical hats wreathed with ribbons, and their waists encircled by a scarf of

brilliant colours, from which peeped out the pistols—implements of their fierce trade. Many had fine faces, bright flashing eyes and bronzed complexions; but in almost all, the expression was dark and sinister, and I turned from them with a kind of terror; murder and crime seemed written in every line of their countenances.

In Botta's History of Italy there is an interesting account of the extirpation of the brigands in Calabria, during the reign of Murat in Naples. The southern provinces of Italy had become the scene of the most fearful robberies and murders that history records: the banditti, forming themselves into regular bands, each under the command of a captain, infested the whole country; travelling was rendered impossible,—no property, no life was secure. Murat, fearing that these brigands might become a powerful engine in the hands of his political enemies, determined to exterminate them, and gave General Manhes unlimited power to accomplish his purpose. The task was one of immense difficulty, but Manhes was a man peculiarly fitted for it; rigid and inflexible, where justice or need required it, he was at the same time humane and courteous. He soon found that gentle means had little chance of success; and with undaunted courage and the most persevering industry he pursued these rob-

bers, tracking them to their wildest retreats, and slaughtering them by hundreds when they fell into his hands. The obstacles he had to encounter seemed at times insurmountable. The ferocity of the brigands, and their knowledge of the country, made it extremely difficult to surprise them; now they would elude his vigilance, flying from him by secret paths; now, lurking in haunts known to themselves alone, they would compel the wretched inhabitants to supply them with provisions. The measures adopted by Manhes were, cruel as they may appear, perhaps those alone which would have proved effectual. He armed the whole country against the robbers, suspended all agricultural employments, ordered the cattle to be driven into the towns, and pronounced a sentence of death on all the country-people who were found with provisions, except those whose names were enrolled in the list of his armed followers. The brigands, thus cut off from all supplies of food, perished from hunger, or, captured by the emissaries of Manhes, were brought to justice, and either hung or imprisoned for life. Thus was Calabria cleared from this nest of hornets, and the memory of Manhes, although held by some in abhorrence for his cruelties, is revered by others, who regard him as their deliverer.

Let me return from this digression, to tell you of Mola di Gaëta, from which place I am now writing. While the rest of our party have wandered out this lovely evening, I, being too weary or too lazy to accompany them, am content to sit quietly in the window of our pleasant room, engaged in my happy occupation, and watching the beautiful effects of the sunset on the promontory of Gaëta, which extends far into the sea on the other side of a bay that separates us from it.

Mola is an enchanting place, uniting all the charms of sea and mountain scenery: the vegetation is luxuriant,—even at this early season flowers are scattered profusely around; asphodels cover the fields, the myrtle hedges are putting forth their spring shoots, and peas are in full blossom; while groves of orange and lemon trees, laden with bright fruit and sweet flowers, fill the air with delicious perfume, and a tall palm-tree or two rear their proud heads, reminding us that we have exchanged our northern climate for the sweet south. The women here wear their hair in a peculiar manner, and, were they more cleanly in their persons, it would be beautiful; a long coil of linen of many colours is twisted in with the hair behind, and the whole is fastened with a silver bodkin.

Naples, February 6th.

HAVING a long day's journey before us, from Mola to Naples, we resolved not to linger on the road, and passed through Capua without visiting its celebrated amphitheatre, which in size, I believe, was only surpassed by the Coliseum; its antiquity is much greater, and it is said to have served as a model for all the others, the ruins of which are scattered throughout Italy. As early as the time of Hannibal, Capua was a town of considerable importance; it was there he fixed his winter-quarters after the battle of Cannæ, and his hardy soldiers became so enervated by the climate and luxurious mode of living of the inhabitants, that they could oppose but a feeble resistance to the Romans.

Before we reached Naples, it was, much to our regret, quite dark, and we thus missed the view which the approach to this beautiful city offers. I could merely see in the twilight the dim outline of Vesuvius and the distant mountains. Our hotel lay at the extreme end of the town, and the novel and busy scene which the streets presented, thronged with people and carriages, was very striking to a stranger. All Naples seemed abroad; the shops were brilliantly lighted; here and there were seen temporary little

booths, ornamented with pillars and arches, festooned with flowers, intermixed with oranges, lemons and other fruit, and illuminated with small lamps; these were lemonade stands, and the continual cry of "*Acqua pura! Acqua fresca!*" showed what a luxury a glass of clear water is esteemed in Naples. Little fires were burning on the ground at the corners of the streets, casting a bright red light on the groups of idlers around.

Tired and weary, we were thankful to alight at our hotel, the "Gran Bretagna," on the Chiaja; and it was only on awaking in the morning, that I was aroused to a consciousness of the beauty which was around me. As I threw open my window, it seemed that I had suddenly been transported to a new and glorious world. The view which met my eye was one never to be forgotten; the Bay of Naples lay before me, in all the glowing beauty of the morning-light, bearing on its surface a hundred little boats. On my left was the city, with its domes and palaces; and beyond rose Vesuvius—its double cone covered with snow, while a small wreath of smoke lay curled upon its summit. Still further, and stretching out to form the southern horn of the Bay, was the chain of mountains reaching to Sorrento; while in the centre of the lovely picture rose the rocky island of Capri, its jagged outline brought into strong

relief by the deep-blue sky. Immediately beneath me lay the Giardini Reali, a broad belt of gardens extending for a mile along the shore, seeming to reach to the foot of the hill of Pausilippo, which forms the northern limit of the Bay.

We have removed into lodgings, which are delightfully situated on the Chiatamone. The sea is before us, and directly opposite to our windows stands the Castello dell'Uovo, a fortress on a rock projecting far into the water, and against which, as I write, the waves are dashing and breaking with great fury. It is bitterly cold, the rain is falling in torrents, and we are for the present prisoners in the house. Farewell!

LETTER II.

Naples, February 8th.

THE history of Naples forms a painful contrast to that of Florence. In tracing the struggles of the latter republic to preserve her freedom, the patriotism which animated her citizens, and the deep and holy love of liberty which actuated all their enterprizes, excites our warmest admiration. The pages of the Neapolitan history are, on the contrary, blotted with records of oppression and cruelty on the one hand, of servility and cowardice on the other; and in the sketch I shall endeavour to give you of the history of this kingdom, I scarcely hope to awaken your interest for a people who were seldom known to assert their rights as men, and in whose breasts the flame of liberty burned but feebly if at all.

Naples was for centuries the prize for which foreign powers contended, being now the victim of French, now of Spanish tyranny: it was originally colonized from Greece, and lays claim, with Amalfi and Gaëta, to great antiquity. As these

two towns had retained their independence, whilst Italy was gradually yielding to the arms of her northern conquerors, they became the retreats of civilization and learning. Professing allegiance to the Emperor of the East, they cherished in their remote territories a love of freedom, and at length, being regarded as objects of small importance by the imperial court at Constantinople, they withdrew from its protection, and asserted their own independence. When the Lombards, in the eighth century, conquered Italy, penetrating far into the country, and, occupying Genoa, Pisa, Ravenna, had established themselves in Benevento, Capua, and Salerno, they found the republics of Naples, Amalfi and Gaëta strong enough to resist their attacks. These states, who were governed by a chief magistrate called a Doge, raised themselves to considerable importance by commerce; their trading voyages in the Levant brought vast sums of money to the citizens of these small towns. For six centuries they maintained their freedom, having avoided the danger which threatened them in 828 from the Saracens (then the occupiers of Sicily), by awakening hostility between them and the Lombards, and thus diverting it from themselves.

In the early part of the eleventh century formidable enemies presented themselves to these brave

republics ; adventurers from Normandy, under the pretence of visiting the shrines of Italy, entered the southern provinces, and by their military prowess and valour succeeded eventually in obtaining possession of the whole of Calabria, Apulia, and Sicily. Naples was one of the places which held out longest against them, but it fell at length into their power. Robert Guiscard, one of their chiefs, was in 1059 created Duke of Apulia by the Pope, and Roger the Second was invested in 1101 with the title of King of the Two Sicilies, which is still held by the sovereign of Naples.

The power and influence of the Norman line increased, and Frederic Barbarossa was glad to seek an alliance with the house of Naples. His son and successor, Henry the Sixth of Germany, married Constance, the grand-daughter of Roger the Second, sole heiress of the kingdom. Their son, Frederic the Second, succeeded to both crowns : he was one of the wisest princes of his time, skilled in all the accomplishments of a knight, an able politician, and an ardent lover of letters. His court was the resort of men of science and troubadours ; all found a welcome, and the patronage they coveted. Amongst those most distinguished by his favour was his chancellor Pier delle Vigne, who was the adviser and friend of the emperor,

and the companion of his studies*. At length the envy and calumny of the courtiers succeeded in undermining the confidence which existed between these two friends: Piero was accused of traitorous dealings; the facts were substantiated by forged documents, and the unfortunate poet was thrown into prison, and condemned to lose his eyes. Dante places him amongst the suicides in his *Inferno*, and pleads his innocence and fidelity to his master in the following touching strain:

“ I it was who held
Both keys to Frederic’s heart, and turned the wards,
Opening and shutting with a skill so sweet,
That, besides me, into his inmost breast
Scarce any other could admittance find.
The faith I bore to my high charge was such,
It cost me the life-blood that warm’d my veins†.”

After a life spent in the attempt to establish the Ghibelline power in Italy, Frederic, when weary of strife and grown old in war, retired to his

* Specimens of the poetry of Frederic and Pier delle Vigne are still preserved, which possess great freshness and beauty: indeed it is remarkable that the Italian language seems to have undergone less change than any other European one: we can scarcely believe, in reading the compositions I refer to, that they were written above seven centuries ago.

† Cary’s Translation, canto xiii.

southern dominions. He then sought earnestly to be reconciled with the Pope, against whom, as the head of the Guelph party, he had so long contended. He died in peace with all men in 1250.

Conrad, his son, who was a weak prince, and at this time absent in Germany, failed to put in his claim to the throne of the Two Sicilies, which was immediately seized by Manfred, Frederic's illegitimate son, a man of vigorous and daring mind, whose avowed hostility to the Guelphs awakening the fears of Pope Innocent the Fourth, he resorted to the dangerous policy of calling in foreign aid. Charles of Anjou, obeying his summons, entered the kingdom of Naples in 1265 with a large army, and in a long and bloody battle fought at Benevento*, Manfred was slain, and the crown passed from the house of Hohenstaufen, with whom it had remained since the marriage of Constance and Henry, into the hands of the Angevines.

Charles, elated with his conquest, used little discretion in his mode of governing his new subjects; he oppressed them with unjust taxes, and extorted money from them by the most cruel means; he was soon universally detested, and Corradino, the youthful son of Manfred, was invited to repair to Naples and resume the throne of

* This is the subject of a modern novel called "*La Battaglia di Benevento*."

his ancestors. He was however feebly supported, and, after an unsuccessful attempt, Corradino was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, from whose ruthless cruelty not even his extreme youth could save him, and he perished on the scaffold. A signal retribution, however, was preparing for Charles of Anjou: his yoke was become insupportable to the Sicilians, and they awaited but a favourable moment to rise in rebellion. Giovanni di Procida was the leader in the fearful insurrection, which, under the name of the Sicilian Vespers, free'd Sicily from the power of this tyrant. For months he had secretly laboured to insure the success of his project, by negotiations with the powerful, and by inciting the people to avenge their grievances. At length, the plot being ripe for execution, on the third of April, 1280, the train was fired, which in exploding banished the French from the Two Sicilies. Some historians affirm that an insult offered by a French soldier to a Palermian girl was the spark which kindled the fierce flame of slaughter in Sicily; others say that it was in consequence of the plot previously concerted by Giovanni di Procida. Be this fact as it may, while the bells sounded for vespers the people rose simultaneously to arms: "Death to the French!" was echoed from street to street and from town to town; all Sicily seemed ac-

tuated by one spirit of hatred to the oppressors. The churches were soon filled with dead bodies; the ways became impassable from heaps of the slain; men, women and children, all perished alike, for the voice of humanity was drowned in the louder and fiercer one of revenge. In the short interval of two hours, eight thousand of the French had fallen victims to the fury of the inhabitants of Palermo!*

The succession to the throne of Sicily was now claimed by Pietro of Arragon, the son-in-law of Manfred, and Charles of Anjou had the mortification to see it again occupied by the family from whom he had usurped it. Grief for the loss of so fair a province of his kingdom soon terminated his life, and he was succeeded as king of Naples by his son Charles the Second, who, unlike his father, was of a gentle disposition. His reign, which lasted twenty-five years, was one of peace and tranquillity. He bequeathed to his eldest son, Charles Martel, the crown of Hungary, which had fallen to him in right of his wife Maria; whilst to Robert, his younger son, he left his Neapolitan dominions. From this act arose the jealousies and dissensions which for so many years involved Naples in fearful misery.

* This subject has been dramatized by several writers, and recently by two authors of this country.

Robert the Second ascended the throne in 1309 ; his reign was the golden age of letters in Naples, and his memory is associated with many delightful recollections. The period in which he lived saw literature and the arts springing to a new existence ; Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio were creating a new language, and in their writings opening to the human mind rich mines of intellectual wealth. It was the pride of “the good king Robert” to assemble around him men whose names reflected honour on him as their patron : Boccaccio resided constantly in his court, and it was under his patronage that the *Decamerone* was written ; while Petrarca, previous to his coronation at Rome, visited Naples, where the examination necessary to entitle him to this honour was conducted by the king himself, who proudly claimed the poet as his friend, loaded him with honours, and regretted that his advanced age did not permit him to accompany Petrarca to Rome and assist at the ceremony.

Let me here interrupt my historical sketch, to speak of Boccaccio, who, although born of Florentine parents, is inseparably connected with the court of Naples, where the brightest, if not the best, days of his life were passed in the society of king Robert, and the galaxy of talent he assembled around him. Boccaccio had been originally

designed for other pursuits : his father, who was a merchant, intended him for business, and placed him in a counting-house ; but the youth at an early age showed great impatience under this restraint, and having, on a mercantile visit to Naples, become acquainted with the learned men who resided there, he free'd himself from it, and gave his undivided attention to letters. Excited by the perusal of the works of Virgil, he visited his tomb ; there his resolution was fixed to devote himself to literature, and at his earnest entreaties his father yielded a reluctant consent. He took up his residence at Naples ; an eye-witness of the reception of Petrarca at that court, of the honours conferred on him, his passion for letters became more intense, and he soon after composed many romances for the amusement of the court, and about the same time he began his famous Decamerone. When we reflect that this work, which was so instrumental in forming and fixing the language of Italy, is still considered the standard of elegant prose writing—that it is said to abound in every charm of composition, now sparkling with mirth, now melting by its exquisite pathos, offering enchanting descriptions of scenery, or startling the reader by its simple details of horror, at once beautiful and sublime, graceful and laughter-stirring,—we cannot but deeply regret that its beauties

are polluted by a mixture of grossness and immorality, which must keep its pages closed to a large class of readers. Boccaccio is said to have undertaken the *Decamerone* at the instigation of Maria of Sicily, the king's natural daughter, and it reflects little credit on her name that she encouraged him in the composition of a work which even the author himself in later years deprecates as immoral. In a letter to a friend, he entreats him not to allow his wife and sister to peruse these tales, adding, "if not for their sake, for the sake of my honour; they will, on reading it, think me the most wicked of men, for who will be near to allege in my excuse that I wrote it while young, and urged to the work by commands not to be disobeyed?"

The friendship begun in Naples between Petrarca and Boccaccio never languished, and it is delightful to see the mutual homage paid by each to the other's merits. Equally devoted to literature, and lovers of the Greek and Roman classics, they applied themselves indefatigably to the collection and copying of ancient manuscripts. Of these labours I may hereafter tell you more; at present I will only remark one point of superiority in Boccaccio to his friend Petrarca; whilst the latter, absorbed in the study of the writers of antiquity, totally neglected the great and glo-

rious poet of his native land, affecting to despise everything written in his mother tongue, Boccaccio felt and acknowledged the sublimity of the *Divina Commedia*; it was his constant study and delight, and his mind became imbued with its spirit and beauty. Boccaccio deeply lamented this narrow-mindedness in his friend, and in the hope of awakening him to an appreciation of Dante's genius, he transcribed with his own hand the whole of the *Divina Commedia*, and, having caused it to be richly illuminated, and the head of each canto emblazoned with the arms of Petrarca, he presented it to him; this failed however in producing its intended effect; the work was praised and commended, but the poet remained callous or insensible to the beauty of the poem. This manuscript, according to Sismondi, is preserved in the Vatican Library.

During the latter years of Boccaccio he applied himself diligently to the recovery and copying of manuscripts; he reformed his life, and finally took the ecclesiastical habit. In 1373 he accepted the invitation of the Florentines to fill the chair which had been appointed for the explanation of the *Divina Commedia*: this office he held for rather more than two years, when he expired at Certaldo.

LETTER III.

Naples, February 9th.

WE now enter on a tragic page of history, which possesses all the interest of a romance. It was in a court graced by the presence of so many celebrated men of letters, amidst all the advantages of learning and wealth, that the beautiful and unhappy Giovanna was educated under the watchful eye of her grandfather Robert the Second. Accustomed from infancy to the society of scholars and poets, instructed by the best masters in every useful science and graceful art, the youthful princess united to a beautiful person and elegant form all the charms of a well-cultivated mind. Let us pause before we enter upon the miseries of her reign, to contemplate her as she has been described by the poet and the artist, Boccaccio and Leonardo da Vinci. The former speaks of her as "fair and goodly to look on, of a graceful presence, of a cheerful and beautiful countenance;" and if the picture which passes

for her portrait in the Doria palace be a faithful delineation of the features of Giovanna, her loveliness must have exceeded all praise. It is said to have been painted by Leonardo da Vinci, from an original sketch of her. She is represented as fair, with rich golden tresses and hazle eyes; the exquisite form of the face and her delicate features are heightened by beauty of expression; there is something, I would say, angelic in that countenance—dignity and strength, tempered by purity, sweetness, and benignity—“a sweet and true majesty,” guileless and winning, yet born to govern and command. Such was Giovanna, the friend of Petrarca and Boccaccio, the unfortunate and calumniated queen of Naples. She was the darling of her grandfather, and, on the death of her father the Duke of Calabria, son of king Robert, she was appointed to succeed him on the throne.

Life opened brightly on the young Giovanna; but misfortunes gathered around her even when a child, and ere she had reached the prime of life sorrow had darkened its whole horizon; as Mrs. Jameson beautifully says, in her life of this queen, “Treachery had come near her, anguish and fear had struck her so deeply, that confidence and happiness seemed to have fled together; the spring of her life was changed to winter; and her dawn,

which ought to have been followed by sunshine and the cheerful day, settled into a cold, calm twilight, to be finally swallowed up in storms and midnight darkness."

She was betrothed at the early age of five years to her cousin Andrea of Hungary, by command of her grandfather, who vainly hoped thus to allay the jealousy subsisting between the descendants of Charles Martel and the Neapolitan family. She found herself united to one who was unsuitable to her in every respect; Andrea was weak-minded and illiterate, indolent and even deficient in intellect, and suffered himself to be led by the will of those around him; watched on every side by his Hungarian soldiers, and held in complete subjection by an infamous man named Fra Roberto, whose ambition and insolence knew no bounds, Andrea became an object of contempt, if not of abhorrence, to the Neapolitans.

On the death of her grandfather, in 1343, Giovanna at the age of fifteen was declared queen; and while preparations were being made for her coronation, she retired with her consort to Aversa. It was there, in a monastery, amidst the tranquil pleasures of a country life, that the awful deed was perpetrated which branded the youthful bride with the title of murderer. In the dead of the night Andrea was strangled in the passage ad-

joining the queen's apartment; by whose hand he fell, was never distinctly known. Torture extracted from some of her attendants a confession of their guilt, and in their agonies they implicated the friends and favourites of Giovanna. Her innocence and entire ignorance of the fearful deed seem established beyond a doubt, yet her name has been handed down by some historians loaded with infamy. Her brief career is one of those romances of real life which exceed in interest all that fiction has invented, and you will be well rewarded for a search into the records of this page of history. After being driven from her kingdom by the armies of Louis of Hungary, who had attacked Naples, to avenge the death of his brother—having pleaded her cause and established her innocence before the Papal Court at Avignon—betrayed by her friends and allies, seeking a refuge from the cares of governing a turbulent and factious people, in four separate marriages—and having experienced every calamity to which a woman and a queen could be subjected—she perished at length by the command of her base and ungrateful nephew, Charles Durazzo, whom she had adopted as her son, appointed her successor to the throne, and on whom she had heaped benefits without end.

After a disturbed reign, Charles met with a mi-

serable death: he bequeathed his crown to his son Ladislaus, whose schemes of ambition were cut short by an early death, and his sister Giovanna the Second succeeded him. She was a weak and unprincipled woman, during whose misgovernment Naples sank to its lowest state of degradation; whilst the queen abandoned herself to the pursuit of her own pleasures, the kingdom was left at the mercy of her favourites. * On her death, in 1434, Alfonso the Magnanimous, king of Arragon and Sicily, laid claim to, and finally obtained possession of, the crown of Naples, and the Two Sicilies were again united under one sovereign. By his equal and impartial administration of justice he conciliated the favour of his people, and the blessings of peace began to show themselves.

But the heirs of the House of Anjou ceased not to assert their right to the crown, and on this pretext Charles the Eighth of France entered Italy and penetrated into the south. Naples yielded without opposition to his arms. Louis the Twelfth, his successor, in right of this conquest, assumed the title of King of Naples; but the House of Arragon long contested the crown with France. At length, under its famous general Gonsalvo di Cordova, it succeeded in establishing its claim, and this kingdom formed

a part of the noble inheritance left by Ferdinand and Isabella to their grandson Charles the Fifth.

Governed by viceregents appointed by Spain, Naples was seldom visited by her sovereigns, and oppression and all the evils of misgovernment fell on the unhappy land. An Italian historian says, “Un Vicerè di Napoli che rapace non fosse, od arbitrario, era tenuto a Madrid anzi in grado d’imbecille che di buono; e chi più mandava oro ai ministri e cortegiani di Madrid, migliore era stimato*.” In 1647, the people, stung by repeated insults, rose to arms at the call of Masaniello, an obscure Neapolitan fisherman. By his eloquent harangues this celebrated man worked on the passions of his fellow-countrymen, and had soon an army of two thousand at his command. Masaniello at their head attacked and destroyed various government offices, opened the prisons and set the captives at liberty. The number of his followers increased hourly, and amounted in an incredibly short time to ten thousand; they then stormed the palace, and with shouts of “Viva il Rè di Spagna! muoja il mal-governo †!” de-

“A Viceroy of Naples who was not rapacious or arbitrary, was esteemed at Madrid rather an imbecile than a good man; and he who sent the most gold to the ministers and courtiers of Madrid was held in the best repute.”

† “Life to the King of Spain! death to the bad government!”

manded a remission of the obnoxious taxes. The Viceroy took shelter in a convent, promising everything that was required. Masaniello was elected captain-general, and the whole city was placed under his command. We read with wonder of the order he maintained amidst his undisciplined troops, repressing tumult, and prohibiting every attempt to plunder; he seemed impelled by the pure and single desire of redressing the wrongs of the people; and while courageously braving the Viceroy and his followers, he continued to inculcate obedience to their and his sovereign.

At length having brought the Viceroy to capitulate, and achieved his great work of emancipation, Masaniello showed symptoms of personal ambition, amounting, as many say, to a species of insanity; this alarmed his adherents, who, with the hastiness and cruelty of a mob, fell upon him, and he died beneath many wounds. No sooner was life departed from his body, than they repented their rash act, and paid him funeral honours, carrying his remains in solemn procession with tears and lamentation to the place of sepulture. Many subsequent struggles took place between the Neapolitans and their rulers, but they led to no important results.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Naples and Sicily were alternately in the posses-

sion of Spain and Austria. In 1759, Charles the Third of Spain declared the kingdom of the Two Sicilies permanently independent, and gave it to his third son, Ferdinand the Fourth (of Spain), who adopted the title of Ferdinand the First: the throne of Naples is now occupied by his grandson Ferdinand the Second.

Buonaparte, in his distribution of thrones after his conquest of Italy, assigned that of Naples to his gallant general and brother-in-law, Gioachino Murat, who reigned for a short time with great splendour. On the fall of Napoleon, he was compelled to relinquish his crown, and lost his life.

Before I conclude this historical sketch, let me say a few words of a community of men, who, bound together in the cause of freedom, have spread dismay into the hearts of the sovereigns by whom Italy is held in subjection—I mean the Carbonari*. This brotherhood arose in the reign of Ferdinand the Fourth, when some brave men, disgusted with the tyranny which oppressed their country, withdrew to the wild fastnesses of the Abruzzi and Calabrian mountains, bearing with them a bitter hatred to their sovereign, not only as their persecutor but as a king. Determined

* For the information I have gained respecting them I am indebted to Botta's History of Italy.

republicans at heart, they swore lasting vengeance to the race of kings, as tyrants all ; nor, when the government assumed a milder form under Murat, did they change their principles or their purpose.

Living at first in concealment amidst the rocks and valleys of the wild retreat they had chosen, many of the Carbonari subsisted by the trade of charcoal-burning, which is carried on extensively amongst the mountains of Abruzzi and Calabria ; and from this employment they derived their name. During this period they were united only by the common bond of vengeance ; but as their numbers increased, they formed themselves into a confederacy and endeavoured to gain proselytes, for which the persuasive eloquence of Capobianco, their leader, singularly qualified him.

The sect now rapidly gained ground, spreading through various parts of the kingdom, and included hundreds of the Lazzaroni even in the heart of Naples. The chiefs, aware that on such men superstition was a more powerful agent than reason, established strange and mysterious rites of initiation into their fraternity. Their symbol was the destruction of a wolf, to avenge the slaughter of a lamb ; the lamb was typical of our Saviour, whose kingdom they sought to redeem from the power of kings and tyrants, whom

they regarded as ravening wolves. They worked upon the minds of their followers by vivid representations of the passion and death of Christ; and when they held their secret meetings, and the mystic ceremonies were performed, a bloody corpse was exposed, to represent that of our Saviour. We may readily imagine what an impression such exhibitions would have on the quick fancy of this people of the south, to whom religion is a feeling, rather than a rational belief. The members passed through four successive ranks; the oaths which bound them to secrecy and fidelity to the cause of liberty were appalling; and their rules, remarkable for their austerity, were rigidly enforced. They had, like the Freemasons, secret means of recognition, amongst which, when they joined hands, was that of making a cross with the thumb on the palm of the hand.

Such is a faint outline of the beginning of this famous league, formed for the overthrow of despotism in Italy: how widely its branches extend, we can but imperfectly imagine; but this we know, that kings tremble on their thrones when the name of the Carbonari is whispered, and every species of cruelty, imprisonment and torture, both mental and bodily, has been inflicted on the members of this fearful body. Yet, in spite of all terrors, threats and promises, the society still exists, and

“according to a popular saying in the country, the charcoal-bag (*il sacco del carbone*) has been shaken, but not opened; the *dust* quickly flew off, but the *coal* itself lay too deep for Austria to reach it*.” Princes and the powerful of the land have enrolled their names on the list of members, and suspicion and terror possess the hearts of sovereigns, who believe themselves surrounded on every side by these enemies of their race.

In reviewing the political history of Naples, how must we commiserate a country, which has never known the blessings of freedom, but has in turn been torn by civil dissensions and oppressed by foreign tyranny. Nor can we be surprised that the arts and literature seem to have shunned a land, where violence and misrule have perpetuated the general ignorance and superstition of the people.

“To these circumstances must be attributed the slender influence which Naples was able to exercise over literature and the arts. Perhaps the assertion of Hume, that ‘it is impossible for the arts and sciences to flourish among any people who enjoy not the blessings of a free government,’ must be received with some qualification ;

* A true and fearful picture of the attempts of Austria to suppress the Carbonari is given in Andryane’s “Memoirs of a Prisoner of State,” lately translated by Mr. Prandi.

yet it is certain that the condition of Naples, when compared with that of Florence, Venice, Pisa, and the other Italian republics, affords a striking testimony to its general correctness. It may, however, be safely asserted, that it is to the influence of moral causes, to those dispositions and arrangements in the affairs of mankind which are peculiarly within their own power, that we may trace the reasons of progress or decline in the liberal arts. To the establishment of rational liberty, to the continuance of public tranquillity, to successful industry and national prosperity, and to the wish to pay due homage to genius and talent, we must refer their successful cultivation and progressive improvement*.”

Naples, February 14th.

WE have not been deterred by the cold wind and heavy showers from making an attempt to see something of this beautiful city, and have visited the Museum, of which I shall speak to you when we are better acquainted with the treasures contained within its spacious halls. At present let me tell you of the churches we have seen: my notice of them will be brief, for they contain little to interest, and are generally speaking tasteless

*.Extract from Mr. E. Taylor's (MS.) Lectures on the Vocal Harmony of the Italian Schools.

in their decorations. The church of San' Martino, situated near the fortress of Sant' Elmo on the highest part of the town, commands one of the finest views imaginable; the building is rich in marbles, and considered very beautiful; but I gladly turned from its aisles, where the brilliant and gaudy colouring offends the eye, to the scene which nature presented on the terrace beyond.

The hospital for disabled soldiers, which adjoins this church, was formerly a Carthusian monastery, founded by the duke of Calabria, the father of Giovanna, just before his premature death. He was remarkable for his wisdom and piety, and it is recorded that he "deemed the charms of this spot too exquisite to be enjoyed by any but a Carthusian monk, who might have his thoughts raised to Heaven by the daily contemplation of what was most beautiful on earth." Such scenes may lose some of their power when the charm of novelty ceases, but the impression they never fail to produce on the mind when first beheld may well sanction the hope thus cherished by the good duke.

In a chapel attached to the palace, belonging to the San' Severino family, we saw three statues, which, although little esteemed by artists, have acquired much celebrity; they are more curious than interesting, as specimens of what the perse-

vering skill of man can produce, and the admiration they excite is rather that with which we regard the labours of a Chinese artist in ivory, than the higher feeling which the noble statues of antiquity raise in the mind. Two of these figures are by Corradini, a Venetian artist; one represents Modesty as a female figure veiled; the workmanship of the veil is so exquisite that it appears perfectly transparent; every fold of the dress is seen beneath, as well as the features of the countenance. The other is a Dead Christ; the body is covered with a cloth, which, damp with the perspiration of death, clings to the lifeless form, revealing the limbs (I had almost said the muscles) of the body, while every feature of the beautiful face is distinctly visible. The third, which is the work of Querinolo, a Genoese artist, is an allegorical figure, representing a man entangled in the snares of sin, and endeavouring in vain to extricate himself; the figure is enveloped in a large net, coiled in intricate folds around him; every mesh is perfect, and stands in parts several inches from the body, although all is sculptured from one block of marble.

I must mention one more church, which is attached to the Dominican convent, and dedicated to San' Domenico. Many of the friars, in their magpie robes of black and white, were flitting

about the aisles; and at length, perceiving that we were objects of curiosity to one reverend old friar, we accosted him; he testified much satisfaction, and did the honours of his church with a pertinacious civility, which, as there was little in it to interest us, was rather irksome. The only thing I remember was a very ancient crucifix, contained in one of the chapels; the story attached to it says, that as St. Thomas Aquinas was one day kneeling before it, the figure of our Saviour addressed him from the cross, saying, "Bene de me scripsisti, Thoma*." The crucifix, which the friar regarded with such reverence, was a shapeless black piece of wood.

* "Thou hast written well concerning me, Thomas."

LETTER IV.

Naples, February 16th.

A WARM, sunny day has at length enabled us to make an excursion beyond the city, and to visit some of its beautiful environs. Passing along the Chiaja, we reached the grotto or tunnel which is cut through the hill of Pausilippo; it is of great antiquity, and is mentioned by many writers, amongst others by Seneca and Pliny; its length is computed to be two thousand, three hundred and sixteen English feet, or rather less than half a mile. The obscurity, far from being decreased, is augmented, or rather revealed, by eighteen small lamps placed at intervals along the walls; its height is often lost in the darkness, and toward the centre it is only by the sound of wheels or voices that you are conscious of the presence of other carriages or people. It was with a feeling of relief that we approached the termination of this long subterranean gallery, and breathed once more the fresh air.

On the Naples side of this grotto, placed on the ascent of the hill of Pausilippo, is Virgil's tomb. We climbed the circuitous path, or rather terrace-staircase, which conducts to the summit; thence descending again by a steep way through gardens, we reached the cave which is said to have contained the cinerary urn of the great poet. Some affirm that Virgil's ashes were not deposited here; but I confess that, in visiting spots consecrated to genius, I like to give myself up to the feelings they awaken, without questioning the precise evidence attached to their traditions. It was to this spot that Petrarca was led by the good king Robert, as a pilgrim to the shrine of his great predecessor; it was here that, in memory of Virgil, he planted the laurel-tree which for so many years overshadowed the tomb; hither did Boccaccio resort, and feel the love of letters glow within his heart; and here did Sanazzaro place the inscription so often quoted:

“ Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope. Cecini pascua, rura, duces*.”

Although the inscription exists no longer and the laurel-tree has withered, though the tomb is rifled of everything it formerly contained, and the

* “ Mantua gave me birth, the Calabrians carried me off, Parthenope [Naples] now possesses me. I sang of meads, the country, leaders.”

bare walls alone remain, yet who can regard these without the deepest reverence and interest?

The remains of Sincero Sanazzaro, the elegant Latin poet of the age of Leo the Tenth, repose in the neighbourhood of Virgil's tomb; this occasioned Cardinal Bembo's famous distich:

“Da sacro cineri flores! hic ille Maroni
Sincerus musâ proximus et tumulo*.”

No spot could have been better chosen for a poet's grave; the view from the tomb, which is situated on the side of a hill and sheltered by shrubs and evergreens, is limited; but a few steps bring the spectator to a point which commands the whole city, the Bay of Naples with its scattered islands, and a wide range of the mountains and country around. It is a scene of exquisite beauty.

Again seated in the carriage, we pursued our way for some miles; when, by the strong sulphurous smell in the air, we perceived that we were approaching the shores of the Lago d' Agnano. The basin of this lake was formerly the crater of a volcano, and the whole country around is filled with volcanic remains. We had not time to visit

* “Give flowers to the sacred ashes! here lies Sincerus, whose muse was akin to Virgil's, whose ashes repose beside him.”

the celebrated Solfatara, which is in the neighbourhood: this extinct crater differs materially from the Lago d'Agnano; the latter being surrounded by richly-wooded hills, while the Solfatara is situated amidst barren and desert wilds. The country, incapable of cultivation, is whitened by the sulphur which continually exudes from the soil.

A small cavern in the rock on the shore of the lake was pointed out to us as the famous Grotto del Cane; it is scarcely large enough to contain two persons, and these only in a stooping posture. The mephitic vapour rises but a few inches from the ground, and we therefore stood unharmed in the Grotto, content to prove the power of the gas by extinguishing lighted candles in it, and declining the ceremony of torturing the dogs which the guide had brought, who, by their trembling limbs and terrified looks, seemed instinctively to know the ordeal that awaited them. After satisfying our curiosity here, we walked along the shores of the lake for some distance, and then turned into a pretty lane, enclosed on one side by limestone rocks, covered with shrubs, myrtles and wild flowers: following its windings for some distance, we came to a spring of boiling water, near which are the remains of some ancient baths, and then returned home, well pleased with our excursion.

Naples, February 19th.

THE Carnival has commenced, and we have twice joined the throng of grown-up children who take delight in its follies. There is after all but little real merriment in the scene; the pleasure consists in sitting in a carriage, and driving very slowly in the train, which forms in two lines in the Strada di Toledo, the finest and longest street in Naples. As the carriages pass, the amusement of the parties is to pelt each other with bonbons, or balls of chalk sweetened, and often egg-shells filled with lime; these are thrown with no sparing hand, and we were obliged to protect our faces with wire masks. The balconies of the houses—and there is one to every window—are lined with ladies and gentlemen, who join in the sport, and shower handfuls of missiles on the heads of the passers-by. Some of the carriages are filled with masks, but fewer than I expected, and these persons did not keep up their characters with any spirit. At such a time, however, a very little suffices to awaken the merriment of a crowd, and, catching the infection, I laughed heartily, as volley after volley of egg-shells burst in the carriage, whitening us from head to foot, or as our bonnets bent beneath a shower of bonbons.

The royal family take part most cordially in

the festivities. The king and queen were in a balcony, and his Majesty, not content with handfuls, threw down basketfuls on our heads. Other members of the royal family joined the throng of carriages, and one party, consisting of eight or ten gentlemen, drove up and down between the lines in a waggon drawn by six horses caparisoned in white and gold; these persons were dressed in grey jackets and white hats, and each had before him a sack of bonbons and quantities of nosegays, which they scattered profusely; and occasionally they threw very small covered baskets, tied with white ribbons and filled with choice sweetmeats. We returned home as white and dusty as millers, but rich in beautiful flowers.

In the evening we went to one of the balls, given every Thursday and Sunday during the Carnival festivities, which here last six weeks. In Rome the gaieties are only kept up eight days, and I hear that the spirit with which they are carried on there is far greater than at Naples. “*Roma è piena di pazzi* ;” laying aside their natural character, the Romans are more wild and extravagant in their folly than their volatile neighbours. The Carnival balls here are given in the theatre of San’ Carlo. I had before seen this building, but had no idea of its size, which is much greater than that of our Italian Opera-

house; the pit and stage were now laid into one; the boxes and parterre were all filled; it was a brilliant and curious scene.

We were very tired this morning, after our visit to the ball, and thinking that nothing would refresh us so much as a row on the bay, we sallied forth. The sun shone brilliantly, and the sea was calm and invitingly beautiful. It is said that Naples is best seen from the sea, and it is indeed a glorious city, rising from the curving shores of the bay, crowned by the fortress of St. Elmo, and intermixed with hanging gardens. We gazed long and with delight on the lovely scene, and then steered toward the northern shore of the bay. Coasting under the Mergellina (celebrated by Sanazzaro), and the road called the Strada Nuova, we passed a palace in ruins, which once belonged to the ill-fated queen Giovanna: it is now used as a glass-manufactory. Numberless little boats were anchored in the bay, and we saw the fishermen casting their huge nets into the water. These men are very picturesque figures, and we are amused at watching them, as they prepare for departure, or return with their boats laden with fish; sometimes we see them seated on the low parapet-wall beside the sea, mending their nets, or weaving the pretty baskets used in the oyster-fishery: their dress is generally a coarse brown

great-coat, with a hood, the arms hanging loose, and a bright scarlet cap. We rowed up to one of them, just as the man had drawn in his net, and examined his fish, amongst which we saw many of the beautiful smooth Venus-shells, the fish of which is eaten here.

We had desired our boatman, who called himself "Moustaches," to take us to the School of Virgil, and, turning a point of rock, we saw on it a small house inhabited by a hermit. Before the door were three large pasteboard figures of saints; the old friar came forward, and pushed a large pole out to the boat, to the end of which was attached a bag, begging money to buy "dell' olio per la Madonna." We gave him a carlino, though aware that it was ill-bestowed. Every one here tells the same tale of these lazy friars and hermits; our boatman was loud in his denunciation of them, saying that they wring from the hard-working people a portion of their scanty pittance, and feast in idleness themselves; nevertheless he, as well as all of his class, never fails to contribute to their support, and will give wine, oil, and fish, when money fails, to purchase their blessing.

The School of Virgil consists of ruined walls, scattered over little rocky islands near the shore. We passed these, and rowing through a narrow

strait, the noble bay of Pozzuoli opened on our view, with its rocky islands of Ischia, Procida, and Nisida; the town of Pozzuoli, the ancient Puteoli, appeared on a point of land projecting far into the blue waters. In the lofty rocks, past which we floated, were many beautiful ocean-caves, looking like palaces of the sea-nymphs; they are worn by the waves deep in the rocky coast, and penetrate some hundred feet into its side. We rowed into one of them; the roofs, rising in perfect gothic arches above our heads, were incrustated with shells of a thousand varying hues, while the water beneath us was green as liquid emerald, and looked unfathomably deep, although so clear.

We now thought it time to return, and, with a favouring wind, our little boat cut swiftly through the waters, landing us at the Santa Lucia. This singular spot, a place of rendezvous for fishermen, boatmen and vendors of every species of eatable, is the line of communication between the Chiaja and Chiatamone, and the busy and more populous thoroughfares. The side of the street next the sea is lined with booths, in many of which are arranged in rows the fresh and sparkling fish; in others, rare and beautiful shells are exposed for sale, while in some, more amusing than all, are seen *traiteurs*, surrounded by their cooking-apparatus, charcoal fires with large pans, from which

risers the savoury steam of messes of vegetables and maccaroni, the favourite dishes of the Neapolitans. These booths are lighted up at night, and you see them filled with people seated round tables eating and drinking.

The lower classes here, as at Rome, live very much *al fresco*; they eat, drink, and sleep in the open air, and many of the Lazzaroni have no other habitation than the large flat basket which they use for carrying goods when they meet with employment, but in which they are much more frequently seen lying asleep or basking in the sun. This race of men are among the idlest, dirtiest, liveliest, and gayest of human beings: give them but their *boccone* and *bottiglia*, which they can procure for little or nothing in this fertile and luxuriant land, and they ask no more; content and happy as princes, they know nothing and care for nothing. In the winter, I am told, they congregate in large caves, but spring brings them forth again, and Naples already swarms with them.

The origin of the Lazzari—or, as they are usually called, Lazzaroni—may be traced to former times. When the kingdom, under the sway of a Spanish viceroy, was oppressed by the avariciousness of the government, and the Neapolitan people, poor and servile in spirit, without either the will or the power to resist foreign tyranny,

were reduced to the condition of mere slaves—when commerce languished, and the arts and sciences were withering beneath the universal blight—thousands of these ignorant and degraded creatures, living like wild beasts, sought a shelter in caves, and food in the common bounty of Providence. Their number is said to have amounted at one time to thirty thousand; poor and abject, fierce and insatiable of plunder, they were ever ready to join in or to excite tumults—a lawless and reckless class, whose number and power at length attracted the attention of the Government, which, by turns ruled them with a rod of iron and shrank timidly before them.

A stranger is forcibly struck with the contrast which Naples presents to Rome; accustomed as we had been to the quiet demeanour of the Romans, and the sombre aspect of their streets, we felt at times bewildered in this crowded and bustling city. Goethe, in one of his letters, says, “While in Rome we seek to study, at Naples the only object is to live: man forgets himself and the world, and to me it is a strange feeling to be surrounded by people who are solely bent on enjoyment.” The noisy gaiety of the people, the perpetual whirl of carriages, the crowded streets, the tumult of voices, all conspire by force of contrast to heighten the effect on the mind. Zanotti, a Bolognese writer

of the last century, draws the following parallel between Rome and Naples, which pleases me from its containing much truth in a few words. “Se fosse lecito di far paragone di due città così magnifiche, direi, che in Roma si trova l’allegrezza cercandola, in Napoli l’allegrezza istessa vi viene incontro e vi cerca. A Napoli la natura ha dato tanti doni che non ha bisogno di molta arte per piacere; Roma s’è fatta bella tutto con l’arte*.”

The noise of Naples may be heard at the distance of two miles. We climbed, a few days ago, to the Castle of Sant’ Elmo, which towers aloft in the centre of the city; and whilst standing there, the mingled and jarring sounds rose in strange discordance. Forsyth well describes the scene presented in the streets of Naples. “It has,” he says, “no parallel on earth. The crowd of London is uniform and intelligible; it is a double line in quick motion—it is the crowd of business. The crowd of Naples consists of a general tide rolling up and down, and in the middle of this tide a hundred eddies of men; here you

* “If it were allowed to make a comparison between two such magnificent cities, I should say that joyousness is found in Rome by seeking for it—in Naples it comes to meet you, and seeks you. Nature has lavished so many gifts on Naples, that little art is requisite to please,—Rome is rendered beautiful entirely by art.”

are swept by the current, there you are wheeled round by the vortex. A diversity of trades dispute the streets with you : you are stopped by a carpenter's bench, you are lost among shoemakers' tools, you dash among the pots of a macaroni stall, and you escape behind a lazzarone's basket."

We find it far more difficult to understand the people here than in Rome ; in the Neapolitan dialect the sweet Italian language is distorted and clipped of so many of its liquid sounds as scarcely to be recognized. Italian abounds in words ; we English are accused of employing very few, and of always using the same expressions ; foreigners indeed say that Madame de Genlis' "*Manuel des Voyageurs*" supplies our limited stock of conversation. An anecdote *apropos* of this was told me the other day. Three English gentlemen, fatigued by the ascent of a steep hill, separately entered a caffè: on arriving one by one, they called for wine ; the first, finding it very good, praised it, adding, "*Si vive bene in questo paese !*"* The second came, was equally pleased, and expressed his approbation in the same words : "*Si vive bene in questo paese !*" When the third entered, and began—" *Si vive bene,*" his companions and the landlord could not refrain from laughing, and the

* "*One lives well in this country.*"

cause being explained, all joined heartily in the merriment. I must conclude my letter; the weather improves, and we begin to talk of making an excursion to Pompeii.

LETTER V.

Naples, February 23rd.

THE Museum (called the Museo Borbonico) has been a source of constant delight to us ; the paintings and statues it contains would alone render it worthy of all attention ; but, valuable as these are, they excite an interest feeble in comparison with the treasures which Herculaneum, Pompeii and the other buried cities of Vesuvius have yielded. Their abundant store of statues, frescos, domestic furniture, and military accoutrements, has been placed here, and the world cannot offer a collection at once so beautiful and so interesting.

It was a favourite plan of Madame Murat, the sister of Napoleon and queen of Naples, to preserve everything found in Pompeii in its original place and position, or rather that which it was supposed to have once occupied ; to have replaced the roofs of the houses, and have restored the city, as much as possible, to its former ap-

pearance, and thus have rendered it a vast and glorious museum; but the scheme was too visionary to have been realized, even had Murat's reign afforded time for such an undertaking. It was, however, by the vigour with which he carried forward the excavations, that so much of the city has been opened. He kept eight hundred men constantly employed on the work, whereas the present king of Naples is satisfied with the feeble and tardy progress made by eight or ten workmen.

It is impossible to attempt any description of the varied objects which this Museum contains. The rooms appropriated to the remains from the buried cities are lined with cases, in which are deposited the smaller articles, while the more massive furniture is ranged around on every side. We have here presented to our view all that was contained in the temples and theatres, the public offices and institutions; while the household arrangements of the ancients are revealed to us in their minutest details; the cooking-utensils, saucepans, frying-pans, pudding-moulds and pastry-stamps, are in form much like our own, differing only in material, bronze having been superseded by copper and iron.

A modern belle indeed would perhaps be puzzled to adorn herself for a ball at the toilette-table of a Pompeian lady; she might mistake the large

and clumsy pins for skewers, and would fancy that the small looking-glass, of which the ancient dame proudly boasted the possession, but ill-reflected her fair face and elegant form; nevertheless the small jars of rouge, perfumes and cosmetics, which formed an essential part of the Pompeian toilette, are still preserved.

In one case, amongst many curiosities, were some pills, rather black and flattened, but still easily recognised; we saw also an instrument, of which the following fact is related. A Parisian surgeon of some eminence had expended much time and skill on the invention of a surgical instrument; it had been received by the faculty, and he had obtained a patent for it. When travelling in Italy some years afterwards, he was amazed to find among the relics of Pompeii the identical instrument—constructed perhaps with less care, and finished with less nicety, but formed on the same principle.

The elegance of the lamps, vases, and domestic utensils is well known, and we have advantageously imitated the ancients in the beauty of their forms. I might fill my letter with the simple catalogue of the numerous articles of ancient furniture preserved in this Museum, and after all give you no adequate idea of the riches which it contains. Let me turn to the rooms lined with

frescos from Pompeii: they are very curious, and most valuable as forming a link between ancient and modern art. We must, however, remember that these paintings are rather the work of ornamental house-painters, than of superior artists, and as such we must regard them with the greatest admiration; they are chiefly found on the walls of private houses, and vary much in subject and excellence—from the fowls, ham, and fish which decorate the walls of the cook's shop, to the spirited scene of the chace, the exquisite groups of little Cupids, and the graceful figure of the forsaken Ariadne. Many of these frescos throw light on the manners, customs and pastimes of the Romans, such as the use of the stylus and tablets in writing, the sacrifices of the temples, rope-dancing and caricatures; amongst which last is the famous butterfly harnessed to a car driven by a grasshopper, supposed to represent Nero and his instructor Seneca. The number of these frescos is very great, and they deserve much more attention than I have yet been able to give them.

The sculpture gallery of the Museum is full of objects of interest, both in bronze and marble. Amongst the former are the famous equestrian statues of the Balbi, found at Herculaneum. The Farnese Hercules and Flora, which were disco-

vered in the Baths of Caracalla at Rome, are of gigantic proportions, and their beauty has done much to remove my prejudice against colossal statues. The Flora, when viewed from a distance, is extremely beautiful; the gossamer drapery falls in graceful folds over the limbs, and, in spite of its size, there is a wonderful lightness and elasticity in the figure. The Hercules has so often been described, and seen in casts, that I need not repeat the criticism of others; it is an embodied personification of strength—if I may use the expression—derived not only from size, but size united to just proportion and symmetry. The group called the Toro loses much from its elevated situation; it consists of three figures; the sons of Antiope are rescuing Dirce from the wild bull, to whose horns the cruelty of her step-mother had condemned her to be bound; the figures of the young men are very spirited.

One room is filled with statues of Venus, but I confess that few of them pleased or satisfied me. A noble statue of Aristides delighted me beyond measure, and the marks which Canova has left on the floor, indicating the best points from which to view it, show his admiration for this work. The head of Pysche, mutilated as it is, having one cheek and part of the head broken away, is nevertheless truly beautiful.

The gallery of pictures here interested me far less than many I have seen. An original sketch of the Last Judgment made me better understand the grandeur of the design of this celebrated painting than studying the original had done; still my feeling about it remains the same. "*La Madonna del Coniglio*" has much of the exquisite grace and sentiment peculiar to Correggio; but the *Madonna of Rafael* in the Pitti Palace is still without rival in my affections. Here is a singular picture by Salvator Rosa, the subject of which is taken from the text of Scripture, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" The artist has treated it literally; a small fly is seen in the eye of one man, and an enormous beam of wood projects from that of the other.

I must here briefly mention the Neapolitan school of Painting, which offers less to engage our attention than those of Rome or northern Italy. It rose into some importance in the fifteenth century, and numbered among its principal artists, Colantonio del Fiore, Zingaro, Pietro and Ippolito Donzelli, and Simon Papa. Their works resemble in many points those of the early Flemish and German schools, and, although generally true to nature, are deficient in the higher attributes of art.

Before we proceed to the artists of a later period

who belonged to the Neapolitan school, let me say a few words on a new and twofold direction which Painting assumed at the end of the sixteenth century. One class of painters, following their great predecessors, studied to glean the peculiar beauties from the different masters, and to remould them in a new form: these have been called the Eclectic* school; their works are generally deficient in the power which can only belong to originality, and the views which they followed naturally tended to lower painting from the high position it had assumed under Michael Angelo and Rafael. At the head of this class stand the Caracci, of whom I shall have occasion to speak more fully when we come to the Bolognese school. At present I mention this class of painters only as contrasted with another who adopted opposite views, discarding the style and manner of the older masters, and following their art in the wild scenery of nature: these are termed the school of Naturalists†.

The greatest master of this school was Salvator

* I need scarcely say that the term *Eclectic* signifies *selecting*: thus the Eclectic philosophers were those who, not following exactly the tenets of any one school, selected what they considered the best points from various ones.

† See Kugler's Handbook of the History of Painting in Italy, vol. i. p. 331.

Rosa, and his eventful life and high reputation as an artist alike merit our attention. Born in a village near Naples, in 1615, he was early called to the arduous duty of maintaining a large family, left by the death of his father totally dependent on his exertions. Thus thrown upon his own resources he went to Rome, where, in spite of his wonderful talents as an artist, he might have pined in poverty and neglect, but for the versatility of his genius, and his ready power of seizing whatever opportunities of displaying it presented themselves.

It was during the festivities of the Carnival at Rome that he first determined to bring himself into notice ; and parading the streets in masquerade, accompanied by some other young men, dressed as mountebanks, he attracted universal attention by the witticisms and the facetious sarcasms which he showered on all around. The Romans, who are peculiarly alive to satire and wit, ran in crowds after the youthful Neapolitan, and from that time his studio was crowded with visitors, his pictures were eagerly coveted, and his society was courted by all the nobility of Rome. Having acquired celebrity and wealth by his own efforts, Salvator resolved to return to his native city, which he had quitted a poor friendless youth. He arrived there at the time of the insurrection under Masaniello, in 1646, and having associated

himself with the insurgents, he was obliged, on the death of their leader and the defeat of their schemes, to withdraw again to Rome. Here his powerful vein of satire gained for him a great but dangerous reputation: he possessed a sarcastic eloquence and an astonishing power of improvising. Cardinals, princes, and the most distinguished men of letters flocked to his rooms, where in an evening he indulged them with reciting extemporaneously those satires which were afterwards committed to paper and published. But the fame he thus obtained drew down upon him a host of enemies, and he was obliged to fly for protection to Florence. After residing there for nine years, in the society and friendship of the most eminent men, honoured and admired, he went to visit the family of the Maffei at Volterra, where he remained three years, during which time he wrote most of his Satires. He then returned to Rome, again to meet the attacks of envy and malice: these he repelled with a courage and ability which won for him general applause. He died at Rome in 1673.

In the works of Salvator Rosa his character and temperament are strikingly visible. Of an independent and restless disposition, he loved to ramble amidst the beautiful mountains and valleys which surrounded his native city, while at other times he

extended his excursions to the wilder fastnesses of the Apulian and Calabrian mountains. Here he saw nature in all the sublime magnificence of desolation, and with a mind tinctured with romance—a poet, a painter and a scholar—his imagination was quickly inspired by the influence of such scenes. His landscapes, which are in my opinion his finest works, are the productions of an excitable and imaginative yet melancholy mind; deep ravines, gloomy caverns, shattered trees and lonely mountain-passes were the objects which he sought and loved to paint; and if under the magic pencil of Claude Lorraine, dipped in the golden hues of an Italian sunset, nature is seen in softer and lovelier aspects, the landscapes of Salvator Rosa possess a deeper power over the heart and mind.

Everything in the life of a great artist which has in an indirect manner shaped the path of his genius, or called forth and directed the powers of his mind, possesses a great interest; and in the character and life of Salvator Rosa we find much which throws light upon the peculiar bent of his studies. He was of an ardent, irritable temper—of a vigorous mind, well stored with learning—possessing great natural wit, refined and sharpened by an extreme sensibility and a severely pure taste. His views of art were entirely opposed

to those of his own and the preceding age, and in his satires he inveighs with unsparing sarcasm against all the great artists, poets, and musicians. He writes as a severe moralist, rather than as an artist; and whilst we admire the spirit of his censures, as directed against those representations in art which offend our sense of propriety and purity, we must acknowledge that he was deficient in a feeling of those higher views of the poetry of art which are so manifested in the great masters of the Florentine and Roman schools. Salvator Rosa ranks as a poet of his class as high perhaps as a painter, and to these accomplishments he added that of a musician.

I must not here omit to mention Giuseppe Ribera, surnamed Spagnoletto, the master of Salvator Rosa. Born a Spaniard, he followed the fortune of the vice-regent of Naples, where he became domesticated. The subjects of his paintings are principally saints, amongst whom St. Jerome seems to have been his favourite: almost every gallery possesses one, easily recognized by the strong hard features and the depth of shadow for which he was famous. The opposition which Spagnoletto and his disciples offered to the youthful and unknown artist is little creditable to them; but Salvator's genius required not the patronage of the court nor of courtly painters. From this re-

proach we must however exempt two celebrated painters, who instructed and assisted Salvator in his studies—Giovanni Lanfranco, who first discovered and encouraged the talents of our artist; and Aniello Falcone, a painter of eminence.

Another master of this school was Luca Giordano, born in 1632. His father, himself a painter, early discovered the talent of his son, and placed him under Ribera: he subsequently visited Rome, where he speedily acquired a more just knowledge of art from studying the works of his great predecessors. By the product of his pencil he maintained his poor and aged father; and from his necessity, he acquired that power of rapid execution which procured for him the title of “fulmine della pittura.” His many excellences, however, seem to have been marred by his extreme rapidity.

I must here close my brief account of the Neapolitan artists, and hasten to tell you of a delightful excursion we have made to Baia and Pozzuoli.

Naples, February 27th.

ON Thursday, tempted by a brilliant morning, we set out early, and, on reaching Pozzuoli, we left the carriage, to visit the extensive ruins of the temple of Jupiter Serapis. The dark clouds, however, which during our drive we had seen gathering

ominously around us, now poured down in torrents of rain; and after hopping from one stepping-stone to another in the large courts of the temple, until we were tired and weary of searching for the picturesque under umbrellas, we retreated to the carriage. A council was held on the prudence of going on to Baiaë; fortunately a gleam of sun which then burst forth decided us, and we embarked in a little boat to cross the bay. We were able to defend ourselves from another pelting storm during our short voyage, and were finally rewarded for our courage by a glorious day.

The Baths of Nero, which we first visited, are long galleries cut in the tufo rock; these are so heated by the vapour arising from a spring of boiling water situated at the end, that we could not bear to remain in them. The water is impregnated with sulphur and salt, and the baths were famed in ancient times for their medicinal properties; it was said by Martial, I believe, "What worse than Nero? what better than Nero's baths?"

Leaving our boat on the shore, we mounted donkeys which were in readiness, and rode to the Lake of Avernus. The whole of this region is volcanic; the roads are strewn with pumice-stone, lava, and tufo, and we passed under a hill called Monte Nuovo, which was formed in thirty-six

hours by the eruption of a volcano in this neighbourhood.

How do history and poetry unite to hallow this land! Here we may wander with Virgil, visiting the Sibyl's Cave, Avernus, the Elysian Fields, and Acheron; but imagination must guide us rather than truth, since the classical scholar strives in vain to trace amidst the labyrinth of caves and lakes the identity of the poet's descriptions. Avernus is no longer

“ The unnavigable lake
O'er whose unhappy waters, void of light,
No bird presumes to wing his airy flight :”

nor does the account which Virgil gives of “ the cave in which the Sibyl makes abode” agree at all with the cavern which is now shown as such. The Elysian Fields too must have quite changed their character, being now merely vineyards, spreading over a level plain. Nevertheless, one seeks not the truth of reality in such a spot as this, where at every step some classical association is forcibly brought to mind; the imagination does not stop to inquire whether the story as told by Virgil was historically true, but lends a willing ear to the legendary voice of poetry; and who would not regard this spot with veneration and delight, where Æneas first set foot in Italy ?*

* See the opening of the sixth book of the Æneid.

But history is a more faithful guide along the shores of this noble bay, and points out the villas to which the Romans, weary of public strife, retired to enjoy life in its delicious climate*. Every step is associated with the name of some great man; Pompey, Cæsar, Sylla, Marius, Tiberius, and Nero, all had palaces here; and although nothing of their splendour remains, nothing but the bare walls, stripped of their former magnificence, yet they cannot be passed without feelings of strong interest. In rowing along the shore, we saw in the clear water beneath our boat the ruins of many a villa; for, as Forsyth says, “men who possessed half a province elsewhere, here contended for a single acre; they who wanted room on the bank, built into the sea, and met there the salubrity of another element.”

“The masters of the earth, unsatisfied,
Built on the sea, and now the boatman steers
O’er many a crypt and vault yet glimmering,
O’er many a broad and indestructible arch,
The deep foundations of their palaces.”

We landed occasionally, to visit the ruins of some of the temples scattered along this coast; amongst which, that dedicated to Venus is the most picturesque; and passing round the rock

* Pliny gives a minute and interesting description of various Roman villas in several of his Letters.

on which the Castle of Baiaë stands, we again mounted our donkeys, and rode to the Cento Camerelle. These are little subterranean rooms, winding about in a labyrinth, which were used by Nero as prisons: their extent is unknown, their deep recesses unpenetrated. Near these is the Piscina Mirabilis, which was excavated by Augustus to serve as a reservoir of fresh water for the supply of the Roman fleet stationed at Misenum: it consists of a large subterranean chamber, of fine architectural design, supported by forty-eight square pillars, twenty feet in height; these form eight corridors, seventy-five feet in width and two hundred and twenty-five long. On how grand a scale did the Romans plan and execute everything!

We now walked on to the summit of a little hill, which commanded a fine sea view. Cape Misenum was just before us, and far and near the glorious ocean spread beneath, with its beautiful islands, Ischia and Procida; while the whole line of coast, to Naples, Vesuvius, and Sorrento rose in the distance. We sat down on the green turf, scarcely able to speak: my heart was filled with the beauty which had thus suddenly burst upon us. Melancholy is the contrast between the luxuriance of this country and the penury of its inhabitants: Heaven has shed its bounties here

with a liberal hand, and man's oppression has blighted them.

Returning to Pozzuoli, we passed the remains of the bridge which Caligula built across the bay, and were put on shore on the very spot where the Apostle Paul landed eighteen hundred years ago: by dinner-time we were again in Naples.

LETTER VI.

Salerno, March 4th.

WHEN it was first proposed that we should winter in Italy, instead of pursuing our original plan of returning home from Geneva, I remember my exclamation was, "Then we shall see Pompeii!" and now it is with a joy which as yet seems too undefined to be real, that I feel we have indeed visited this city of past ages, have penetrated into its houses, wandered amidst its deserted streets—that we have stood in its Forum, and gazed on its ruined temples. Do you wonder that I feel as if awaking from a dream? Pompeii possesses an interest which even the most magnificent cities of the Roman empire must fail to excite; in them we may see finer ruins, monuments of the power and splendour of the ancients, but here and here only we can contemplate man as he existed in former times; here we are admitted into the retreats of private and domestic life, and can learn from observation that man is in all ages the same; we

follow him from his own house to the theatres, the baths, the Forum, and the temples; we trace the same actuating motives, the same love of splendour, of amusement, the same eager pursuit of business, the same impulses to soar from earth to the invisible and eternal world beyond. It is this which excites the most powerful feelings of our nature as we wander through Pompeii.

I have somewhere seen it said, "*Roma non è che un vasto museo—Pompeii è un' antichità vivente.**" A city, after having been for nearly two thousand years hermetically sealed, preserving within itself entire the whole economy of public and private life, is at once untombed; what treasures, what stores of knowledge does it unfold! Centuries have passed away since the destroying flood swept from the earth all trace of this once powerful community; new empires have arisen and fallen; dynasties and races of people have succeeded one another; manners, customs and habits have changed, and new worlds have been explored; and suddenly a city is discovered, which exhibits life as it was when Rome was a mighty empire. The effect of this has been to throw more valuable light on the history of the ancients than all the speculations of laborious antiquaries. Thus

* "Rome is only a vast museum—Pompeii is a living antiquity."

it is, that the simple contemplation of what is tangible and material realizes truth to the mind more strongly than the sagest theories.

It is well known that the awful eruption of Vesuvius which overwhelmed Herculaneum and Pompeii took place A.D. 79, in the reign of the emperor Titus. The remembrance of these cities had entirely passed away, and their existence was known but as a tale that is told; until, in 1720, the attention of the Prince d' Elbœuf was attracted to the spot by several valuable relics of antiquity, which he purchased from workmen employed at Portici in digging a well. His curiosity being excited, he began to excavate, and was ultimately rewarded by the discovery of still more beautiful and rare antiquities, amongst which were several statues. The attention of the Government of Naples was aroused by his acquisitions, and he was commanded to desist; the excavations were afterwards carried on by Charles the Third of Naples, and Herculaneum was discovered. The king, being engaged at that time in the erection of a palace at Portici, gladly availed himself of the treasures from the buried city to enrich his royal abode. The discovery of Pompeii was also the result of accident, and did not take place until 1748, when some men, at work in the vineyards on the banks of the Sarno, finding several objects of curiosity, were

led to make further investigation, and the city was at length revealed.

Herculaneum and Pompeii were overwhelmed and entombed on the same day; their existence was terminated by the same cause and the same agent, an eruption of Vesuvius, which buried Pompeii under a shower of ashes, and obliterated Herculaneum by a flood of lava. The latter lying nearer to Vesuvius, the destructive torrent, pouring down its sides, inundated every corner and filled every crevice. This has rendered the prosecution of the excavations here difficult and dangerous to the villages built over it; the lava has become as hard as stone, and is consequently worked with great labour. Pompeii on the contrary, to which the lava did not reach, was overwhelmed by ashes, burning stones and hot water; these materials, being of a lighter nature, lay like a crust over the city, which was easily removed. Thus, while we wandered through the streets of Pompeii in the free open air, gladdened amidst the desolation around by the bright rays of the sun and the cheerful sounds of nature, we were obliged to grope our way through the dark passages of Herculaneum, realizing to our imaginations the horrors of the living grave it proved to so many of our fellow-creatures.

As I cannot write you a long or learned descrip-

tion of these cities, I must content myself with endeavouring to relate our adventures during the day we have spent there, and to give you as faithfully as I can my own impressions of what I have seen. The morning we had fixed for our excursion to Pompeii and Salerno was beautiful—the sky without a cloud, the sun shining brilliantly, and the air mild and delicious. As we drove out of the city, in the early morning light, country girls met us, throwing nosegays of violets into the carriage, still wet with dew and filling the air with sweet perfume.

On reaching Portici, we alighted at a gate, over which was inscribed in large letters “Scale di Ercolano.” With wax tapers in our hands, and attended by a guide, we descended the stairs cut in the lava, and presently reached the level of the ancient city. All was darkness and gloom, and as we threaded the intricate mazes, a feeling of indescribable horror seized me. I endeavoured in vain to comprehend the description the guide gave us; I remember being led round the corridors of the theatre, and seeing the well, in sinking which the city was first discovered; but all else was unintelligible to me, and it was with delight that we quitted Herculaneum, and returned to the open day.

How different was Pompeii! I can never lose the impression made upon my mind as we entered

the Street of Tombs. The ancients had a superstitious reverence for everything touched by the lightning of Jove; it was with a similar feeling of awe that I regarded this city, which seemed to me a sacred spot: death and ruin had swept through its streets, and the silence of desolation now reigned around. Other and mightier cities have fallen by the hand of time or the sword of barbarians; Rome, Palmyra, Babylon, the glory of them all has passed away; we can trace the causes of their decline, and watch them in their decay as in their rise; but in the dreadful fate of Pompeii there is a deeper and more startling interest. Suddenly, awfully did destruction fall upon it, as a thief in the night, crushing and burying the entire city in a few short hours; in the morning its streets were alive with the crowds eagerly pursuing their pleasure or business, heedless of the coming doom:—at night it was a mighty sepulchre! Death in many cases overtook the unconscious inhabitants in the midst of their employments: here the mason's hammer was arrested in the act of striking the chisel; there the sentinel was struck while at his post of duty; one spot is pointed out where the skeleton of a poor mother was found clasping a baby to her breast, unable to shield her child from the ruin which involved them both. In the shops men were actively engaged in the business

of life ; the loaves were found in the baker's oven, the hot drinks stood on the marble counters of the Thermopolium, prisoners were discovered in their solitary cells, while the ministers of justice sat in the courts above. In many cases men and women, terrified at the approaching torrent, seem to have attempted to escape—some by flight—but whither could they fly ? others sought refuge in the subterranean cellars, but even there death met them. The picture is too painful to realize ; everywhere traces of life and activity are visible, but activity suddenly arrested by the touch of death, and you start at the desolation and silence around. The Street of Tombs derives its name from the sepulchral monuments which line it on either side, and at its termination stands the gate of the city. The Villa of Diomed, which is situated without the walls on this side of the town, although small, is amongst the best preserved houses.

All the private residences are built on nearly the same plan ; they surround a court-yard, or, in the larger, two courts are embraced in one house : in the centre is a reservoir for water, generally of white marble ; on this we saw the marks of the cords by which the buckets had been drawn up. The sleeping apartments are of such narrow dimensions as to admit of no furniture but a bed,

and many of them have no windows. The reception rooms are larger, but even in the houses of the principal citizens these are small compared with modern drawing and dining rooms. In the cellars of Diomed's Villa, under the porticos which surround the garden, seventeen skeletons were found buried in ashes. One female figure had on, when discovered, bracelets, rings, and ornaments of gold; the skeleton mouldered away when exposed to the air, leaving only an impression of the bust in the ashes. Another poor wretch was found grasping bags of money and keys in his hands. What reflections do these pictures call up in the mind!

We now entered the city, and at first could not be persuaded to pass a single door unentered; but our guide Salvator soon convinced us that we must confine our attention to the principal objects, as we had much to see, and our time was limited. We had first, however, visited the Thermopolium, or shop in which hot drinks had been sold—the *cafè*, as Salvator called it; on the marble counter were still seen the marks left by the vessels; the oil and wine shop with the till for money; a public mill and bakehouse, where under the oven we saw the beautiful capillaire growing—a strange place in which to find “the plant that loves the water-drop!” Next door to this was a soap-manufac-

tory, and a little further on stood a house which we recognized by the serpent twined round the door-post as having been inhabited by a disciple of Esculapius.

Continuing our walk towards the Forum, we entered several private houses : on the threshold, in plain black and white mosaic, was the hospitable word "SALVE." The most beautiful house which has yet been excavated is that of the Dramatic Poet : the court is paved with beautiful mosaics, and the walls are covered with frescos. When no inscription leads to the discovery of who the owner of a house was, it is named from the things found in it. Thus the "Casa della Caccia" is so called from a very fine fresco representing a lion-hunt ; the "Casa del Fauno," from a faun, etc. In the floor of the latter house was found the most beautiful existing specimen of mosaic either ancient or modern : the subject is one of the battles between Alexander and Darius, and the moment chosen is that in which victory has declared in favour of the former, who, mounted on his Bucephalus, is charging the Persians, whilst his antagonist is seen standing in his chariot, surveying with dismay the defeat of his troops. The figure of the vanquished monarch is truly noble ; grief for the loss of his friends, who are falling around him mortally wounded, is strongly depicted on his counte-

nance; he grasps convulsively the bow which remains now useless in his hand; but he still retains the dignified demeanour of a king: his fierce rival advances on him, sword in hand, dealing death around, whilst by the head (which alone remains) of his fiery steed, we recognize the indomitable Bucephalus. I can give you no idea of the beauty of this mosaic—the life, the motion, the varied expression of the figures; the wonderful power of the design can only be understood when beheld: it is a study for an artist, and seems rather a fine painting than mosaic-work. How valuable is this specimen of art, as proving the wonderful perfection which design as well as sculpture had attained amongst the ancients! the man who could compose such a picture, and breathe such spirit into his figures, might well rank amongst the first artists of the world.

I have already spoken of the frescos taken from Pompeii and placed in the Museum at Naples: some still remain on the walls where they were originally executed, and are certainly seen here with tenfold interest. I am glad to learn that the king intends to remove no more. Every house, every room is ornamented with them; in some, beautiful arabesques cover the walls, or surround the apartments in graceful cornices; in others are fine paintings, spirited in composition and retaining a wonderful brilliancy of colour.

After lingering amongst the private houses much longer than our guide thought prudent, we at length approached the Forum. This is certainly the most beautiful part of Pompeii, yet to me it was less interesting than the narrow street we had just left. The view from the Temple of Jupiter, which stands at one end, raised on a high platform of steps, is singularly fine; it commands a sort of bird's eye view of the city, with its branching streets, rows of fallen columns, ruined houses, gates and temples: the roofs of all have given way, and every interior is laid open. We saw from this point how little way beneath the surface of the present soil the city lay buried; the vine-dressers were busily occupied in pruning their vines just above us.

The Basilica, or Court of Justice, stands in the Forum; in the prison beneath it, which we visited, two skeletons were found, with iron fetters upon their limbs—what a fate was theirs! My letter is extending to an immoderate length, and I must hasten to a conclusion, observing briefly that many of the temples which we now saw—dedicated to Isis, Venus, Mercury, Hercules and other Pagan deities—are beautiful even in their ruin. The two theatres, one devoted to Tragedy and the other to Comedy, preserve their form and the ranges of seats entire, and on the floor of the latter is an

inscription inlaid in letters of bronze. Near this spot we sat down, and, having brought our dinner from Naples, ate it beneath the shade of some vines, preferring this to entering the dirty little *locanda*. After dinner we crossed the unexcavated part of the city, to the Amphitheatre. This is a miniature Coliseum, retaining its perfect oval form, and all the seats, many of which are still covered with marble; the Vivarium too remains, and the cages for the wild beasts, in one of which the bones of a lion were discovered. We had now reached the gate at which our carriage awaited us, and, taking leave of our intelligent guide, we left Pompeii with great regret, but cherishing in our hearts a hope that we might return at some future day.

A word of Salvator: in the course of our wanderings through Pompeii, I had observed him watching us when we addressed each other in English, and trying to repeat after us any word of which he caught the meaning. Finding that he knew many English words and expressions, we took pains to teach him more, for which he was very grateful, and entered freely into conversation with us; he was acute in his observations, and the remarks he made were sensible; one surprised me; he said, "Signorina, ella non parla come gli Americani*;" and when I said that he

* "Lady, you do not speak like the Americans."

was mistaken, for that we spoke the same language, he added, “*Perdono, essi dicono Isis temple, ella dice temple of Isis.*”*

Salerno, March 5th.

FROM Pompeii we proceeded yesterday to Salerno, through La Cava. Here the scenery becomes truly romantic; the road winds amidst lofty rocks, deep glens and mountain defiles—such scenes as Salvator Rosa chose to paint; it is said that he spent many of his early days in this neighbourhood. The first view of Salerno is very magnificent; it stands on a gulf of the same name, which, in my opinion, far exceeds the bay of Naples in beauty, though of less extent; the mountains shut it in completely, rising perpendicularly from the water to an immense height, now clothed with groves of luxuriant growth, now towering into rocky and barren pinnacles, crowned with dilapidated castles or monasteries. The town itself is dirty and disagreeable, but it was rendered interesting by the remembrance of what it had once been, when in the tenth and eleventh centuries it struggled to maintain its independence, as one of the three great republics of Magna Græcia. As a seat of learning too it acquired much celebrity,

* “Pardon me, they say Isis temple, you say temple of Isis.”

when Europe was plunged in ignorance: from its colleges students were sent to all parts of Italy. It was especially famous as a medical school; the knowledge of this science had been brought by the Arabians, who had settled in great numbers at Salerno. As early as A.D. 1100, the Salernitans had published a work on medicine, which was much esteemed, and invalids came from distant parts of Europe to consult the physicians of this city.

This morning we rose early, it being our intention to visit Pæstum. Our journey was a long and tedious one; twenty-five miles of flat uninteresting country contrasted ill with our drive of the preceding day; we were however amply rewarded when the majestic temples appeared in sight. We had long seen them in the distance, on the desolate plain we were crossing, before we recognized them as the objects of our journey.

How grand are these temples of the desert in their solitude! Little or nothing of the ancient town of Pæstum remains, and the attention is centred in these noble structures. Everything around is in harmony with them; they stand alone upon a wide plain, bounded by lofty mountains on one side and by the sea on the other, glimpses of which are caught between their columns. The age of these buildings is not known, although undoubtedly they are more ancient than

any others in Europe, except the temples in Sicily, which may perhaps claim to be of the same date, and were visited by the emperor Augustus as objects curious from their antiquity ! They are three in number—the temple of Neptune, which is the largest, that of Ceres, and another called the Basilica. The columns supporting the architrave and pediment alone remain in any of them ; these have no pedestal, and spring from the floor of the temple, which is raised on many steps. The stone of which they are built is a kind of petrification, formed in the neighbouring river Silarus, which, as it flows, deposits calcareous particles ; it is very hard, and broken with great difficulty ; the antiquity of the temples proves its durability. I have never seen any buildings which inspired me with the same unmixed feelings of delight and admiration ; the perfect simplicity, and consequent grandeur, fills and satisfies the mind ; as in character, so in art, simplicity is the key to the heart.

On returning from our walk, we found our tablecloth spread on a huge block of stone in the Temple of Neptune ; and there, beneath the shelter of those venerable columns, with the sky above us, and the distant sound of the ocean stealing at times upon our ear, we dined : might not kings have envied us our hall ? Farewell !

LETTER VII.

Naples, March 12th.

THE last few days have been full of adventure, and I sit down amidst preparations for our departure tomorrow morning, to tell you all that we have seen and done. My last letter left us at Salerno, whence we determined to proceed to Amalfi and Sorrento; and sending the carriage back to Naples, we trusted to being able to proceed on mules or by boats, for in this wild country there are no roads, and Amalfi is accessible only by the sea or mountain-paths. We embarked in a boat, manned by four picturesque-looking figures, and at first greatly enjoyed our row. The gulf of Salerno, encircled by its amphitheatre of lofty mountains, was bright in the rays of the morning sun, and the towers of the town stood forth in fine relief against the blue sky. As we floated along beneath the high rocks, it was beautiful to watch the waves dashing against their base, breaking in showers of white foam, or bursting with a hollow roar like a cannon in the caves

with which this coast abounds. These waves however, beautiful as they were, soon proved a source of misery to us. As we doubled a fine headland called Capo d' Orso, the sea became very rough; our little boat now sank in the valleys formed by the large billows, now rose on their foamy crests. None of our party were good sailors, and we were soon unable to speak or look around. Our boatmen, probably in the hope of a larger reward for saving our lives, now talked loudly of danger, and, calling on St. Gennaro and all the saints to save us, crossed themselves devoutly every minute. I believe there was little real danger, at any rate we were too ill to be conscious of it, and were only eager in our entreaties to be put on shore. After some time we were landed at a little fishing-village, and scrambling up the rocks, came upon a road now forming between Amalfi and Salerno; here we sat down, to recruit our exhausted strength, for we had a long walk before us. Anything, however, was preferable to the sea, which lay beneath us so treacherously beautiful.

The air by degrees revived us, and, after we had proceeded some little way, we began to enjoy the romantic scenery. The road, winding round little bays and coves, and raised high above them on the side of the mountain, presented at every turn

new and exquisite points of view ; the whole scene was truly Italian, and the trains of peasant-girls we met, in their pretty costumes, bearing on their heads vessels of the most elegant and classical form, gave to it animation and character.

Amalfi is by far the most picturesque town I have yet seen ; situated in a hollow amongst the lofty mountains of this rocky and precipitous coast, its houses are spread along the shore, and rise in an amphitheatre on the heights around ; some of these are crowned by large buildings, which from a distance have the appearance of dilapidated castles, although in reality they are but paper-mills and macaroni-manufactories—Amalfi being famous for both these articles. A wild defile runs up from the town into the mountains beyond, and groves of olives and myrtles cover the lesser heights, from which emerge the bare points of many a grotesque and barren crag. This town, now decayed, has many claims on our interest : with Salerno and Naples it stood forth the champion of republican freedom at the period when Europe was awakening from its sleep of ignorance and superstition. Amalfi furnished supplies of arms and vessels to the Crusaders. I have told you how, after successfully resisting the Lombards, these three great republics were subdued by the Norman adventurers. Twice the town was sacked

by the Pisans, who were jealous of its maritime power, and from the second of these attacks it never recovered. In 1135 the celebrated Pandects of Justinian were discovered in this city—that code of laws which has served as the basis of all our modern systems of jurisprudence; and in 1302 Amalfi derived new glory from the discovery of the mariner's compass, for which the world was indebted to Flavio Gioja, one of its citizens.

On entering Amalfi, our hotel was pointed out to us at the further extremity, perched at a great height. Faint and weary, we were in dismay at the thought of toiling up the long flights of steps, cut in the rock, which led to our harbour of rest; but we had no alternative, and at length we entered the large inn, which had formerly been a Capuchin monastery. Before the entrance door was a spacious grotto hollowed in the rock, from the roof of which hung large stalactites; it had evidently been a chapel belonging to the monastery, and still retained the old crosses, around which pasteboard figures were kneeling. In spite of our fatigue, we found great amusement in our singular hostelry, which retains its original form; the cloisters remain, and the narrow cells occupied by the friars are now converted into bed-rooms; each one containing a small bed, singularly neat and comfortable. We dined in the refectory, a

spacious barn-like apartment, over the door of which was inscribed in large characters, "Domus Refectionis," and on the wall at the other end, "Silentium! Sancte Francisce, protege nos!" There was such a monastic air about the whole house, that as I saw figures gliding about the long corridors, I fancied them friars, in their dark robes and cowls; and at night, when I lay down on my bed, these images still haunted my pillow.

Early awakened by the sun shining brilliantly into my little apartment, I arose, and opening the window stepped on to the balcony. What a scene of surpassing beauty was before me! sea and mountain were lighted up by the golden morning light, while dark clouds lay piled in masses on the horizon. Long did I stand lost in admiration; all the poetry of my nature was aroused, and lent its aid to heighten the enchantment of the scene.

The escape from Amalfi was difficult; we had but one alternative—either to ride for seven hours on mule-back across the peninsula to Castellamare, or to trust ourselves again to the sea. Reluctant as we were to risk a repetition of the previous day's sufferings, we feared to undertake so fatiguing a land journey, and committed ourselves once more to the ocean, on the assurance of the boatmen

that in two hours and a half they would land us at Sorrento. We all tried to forget the former voyage, and strove to be merry, but in vain; the heavens were not propitious to our mirth; one by one our party became silent, and at length every tongue was hushed. The rain now descended in torrents; to proceed seemed impossible; every minute increased our misery, and we only desired to be on land again, we cared not where; two weary hours however passed before the bold and rugged face of the rock offered us any place of refuge. At length the boatmen made for Scaricatojo, where we were landed thoroughly exhausted; those who were unable to walk were carried, and laid in an insensible state on the beach. The scene which ensued is beyond my power of description; those alone who have heard Italian voices raised to their highest pitch can understand the terror with which they now inspired us. Our only place of refuge was a cottage, inhabited by a few gens-d'armes—not another house was in sight. Those of our party who were able to think and act, had our more suffering friends conveyed to this wretched hovel, where they were placed on the only two miserable beds which the place supplied. Nothing could exceed the kindness and attention of the men to whom the hovel belonged. After all had been done for us that our situation

permitted, and our invalids showed some symptoms of returning strength, we began to think of moving on our journey.

Wet, tired, hungry, and exhausted with seasickness, we had now a high mountain to cross—a difficult march before us of three hours and a half: the idea was terrible, but necessity smooths many ways which are deemed impracticable. We set off; the rain had subsided, and the sun once more shone forth cheeringly; the pathway was narrow and rugged, overhanging the sea in frightful precipices, or leading us to the foot of the mountains, amidst scenery which at another time would have filled my heart with rapture; but every foot now seemed a mile, and with a feeling of gratitude we found ourselves at the summit of the mountain, where donkeys were awaiting us, which our considerate servant had ordered, by telegraphic signals, to be in readiness.

We proceeded to Sorrento, and reached the Cocumella hotel at about five o'clock, just as it was getting dark. Our train of followers was one to arrest attention; it consisted of seventeen persons, attired in every imaginable variety of ragged costume; some carrying our carpet-bags, cloaks and umbrellas, others guiding our donkeys. Oh the unspeakable delight of the rest which awaited us at the pleasant Cocumella! Every sofa

was in requisition, and, assembled round a fine blazing fire, we soon began to laugh at our past adventures.

Our fatigue was however so great, that we could see little and enjoy nothing of beautiful Sorrento. We dragged our weary limbs to the house which Tasso inhabited, and admired (as the coldest heart must do) the view from the terrace. This town is dirty and uninteresting, but the plain in which it stands is delightful, situated between the mountains and the sea, and planted with orange and lemon groves and vineyards, in the midst of which our inn was situated, three quarters of a mile from the town. The views it commands are magnificent, embracing the whole bay of Naples, and the line of coast to Cape Misenum, with the islands of Capri, Ischia and Procida.

After remaining one day at the Cocumella to rest, we started on donkeys for Castellamare : the journey occupied three hours, and I have seldom experienced greater enjoyment. The day, like that we spent at Pompeii, was one of unclouded splendour, and the mountain pathway along which we travelled presented ever-varying and beautiful views. After leaving the plain of Sorrento, we skirted the side of a lofty mountain, raised five hundred feet above the sea, and, turning a sharp point of rock, the bay, which we had for a time

lost, burst upon our view. Naples rose out of its crystal wave like the queen of ocean, while Vesuvius towering to the right emitted volumes of dark smoke. Nearer to us, at the foot of the mountain round which our path lay, were numerous little coves, shut in by the rocks, the sheltered nooks forming harbours for fishing-boats, many of which we saw moored on the sandy beach, and long lines of fishermen busily employed in drawing in their nets. Wild flowers grew around in rich profusion, covering the rocks, from the crevices of which sprang the gigantic aloe: the air was filled with perfume, and the sweet music of the waves, as they broke beneath, reached our ears. Every sense was satisfied, and our enjoyment was perfect.

Castellamare disappointed me; it is a busy, bustling town, and there was something painful in quitting the wild and beautiful scenes of nature amongst which we had spent the last few days, and returning to the turmoil of life again.

Before the next day closed, however, we had seen nature in a new and awful form; we had ascended Vesuvius, and witnessed the beginning of a volcanic eruption. Before quitting Naples, we heard reports that an approaching tumult in the mountain was anticipated: volleys of smoke ascended from time to time from the crater, or lay curled

in clouds on the summit; the wells at Naples were becoming dry, while those at Resina were overflowing; loud noises too were heard on the mountain, and it was rumoured that fire had been seen by night.

Upon reaching the house of Salvator at Resina, the principal Vesuvius guide, he told us that the mountain was in action, that a new crater had been opened the night before, and was sending forth flames and stones. We speedily mounted our donkeys—poor miserable little creatures, which had already been up the mountain twice during the preceding twenty-four hours—and started full of expectation. For some time our path lay between walls built of blocks of lava, strewn with volcanic stones. In about three-quarters of an hour we reached a wide current of lava—that of 1810; it was like a frozen Styx. The scene was one of wild desolation; not a trace of vegetation was seen; black, dark, and barren was the surface of the earth; in some places the lava, arrested in its course, resembled petrified waves, whilst in others it formed a hard compact surface; our guide pointed out to us the streams of lava of 1819, 1822, and 1833.

On a hill formed of volcanic products, raised like a ridge high above the currents of lava that have swept past it on either side, stands the her-

mitage. One solitary friar has pitched his tent in this wilderness, and has lived here nearly twenty years, never quitting the spot even during the most awful eruptions of the mountain. Here we halted for twenty minutes, to rest our poor little steeds. The lava, which we had before crossed in comparatively regular streams, was now piled about in huge blocks, amongst which we picked our way with difficulty.

We soon arrived at the foot of the cone, and were obliged to leave our donkeys, and commit ourselves to the mercy of twelve *portantini*, or bearers. The soil is so loose, and the ascent so frightfully steep, that no animal except man can find a footing. I do not remember ever in my life to have been so entirely overcome with terror as in the scene which followed. The ladies of our party were placed in small arm-chairs, fastened upon long poles, which the men supported on their shoulders. Imagine what it was to be thus lifted up by twelve men, who sank knee-deep in the ashes at every step, and whose footing was so uncertain and irregular, that I was one minute thrown to one side of the chair, and the next flung violently forward, and then as suddenly jerked back again. All the time the men screamed, as Neapolitans only can scream. The *portantini* who were carrying one of my friends fell

down all at once, and this was the signal for my bearers to rush past them, yelling with delight; so wild and uncivilized a set of beings you never saw, and the noise they made was something quite unearthly. I completely lost my presence of mind, and in piteous tones besought the men to let me get down and walk; but instead of heeding my entreaties, they only raced on the more desperately.

When I reached the summit, after having endured this terror for three-quarters of an hour, I sat down, and buried my face in my hands, unable to speak. After a little while, when I raised my eyes and looked around, what words can picture to you the scene that presented itself! We were standing on the edge of the large basin, in the centre of which were the craters in action. When all our party were assembled, we followed our guide, and proceeded towards them, scrambling over rocks of hot lava, and stepping across deep chasms, from which rose a hot sulphurous exhalation. I can never forget the feelings of that moment; I had lately seen nature in her most grand and lovely forms, and remembered with delight the sublime beauty of Switzerland; but here I beheld her under a new aspect—awful, terrific, and overwhelming—working in the secret places of the earth, with a power of destructive and

mysterious energy, and revealing itself to man in fearful and desolating might. I gazed, and thought of Herculaneum and Pompeii.

We stopped on a high point of lava, and looked into the mighty caldron beneath us: loud subterranean noises were heard from time to time—the mountain seemed shaken to its centre; then columns of bright clear flame spouted forth from the crater, succeeded by volumes of dense black smoke; red hot stones and masses of rock were hurled hundreds of feet into the air, some falling back into the crater, while others, dashed into a thousand pieces, were scattered around. After standing on this pinnacle for some time, the guide led the way to the very edge of the crater. I felt that I had seen enough, and begged to be left behind, being indeed too cowardly to venture on; the rest of the party, however, had sufficient courage and curiosity to explore further. I asked our guide if there was really any danger; he looked at me earnestly, and simply said, “*Signorina gentilissima, ho sei piccolini in casa!*” * Could any words have conveyed a stronger assurance than this touching appeal? It gave me courage, and I proceeded with the others.

And now we stood beside the crater; and as each volley of smoke and flame subsided, we

* “Gentle lady, I have six little children at home!”

peeped into the abyss. Then came a hollow fearful sound ; the earth beneath us trembled, the smoke and flame again ascended, stones were shot up into the air high above our heads. Suddenly the wind changed, and our position was by no means an enviable one : the smoke and sulphurous vapour were blown towards us, and red hot stones fell in showers around. Every one was now terrified ; we fled like a herd of startled deer, and scrambling up the hill as fast as the loose and slippery soil would permit, only turned to look back when we had reached the top. We were now content with a more distant view, and lingered long near the crater, reluctant to leave a spot which we were so unlikely ever to visit again.

At length we prepared to descend the mountain : I had dismissed my chair, determined to trust alone to my feet ; supported by a friend and one of the guides, I advanced down the precipitous descent, slowly and cautiously at first, but gaining courage as we proceeded I soon ran briskly on, and in four minutes reached the foot of the cone, which it had cost us so much time, toil and suffering to ascend.

Remounting our donkeys, we soon joined those of our party who had not ventured on the ascent, and, as we drove back to Naples, related to them our adventures. But how vain were all our en-

deavours to give utterance to the thoughts and feelings which this day's excursion has awakened ! My paper warns me to conclude ; in a few days we shall leave Naples, and I shall perhaps not be able to write again to you before we reach Rome : for the present farewell !

LETTER VIII.

Rome, March 26th.

WE are arrived once more in safety at Rome, after a rather anxious journey. Just before our departure from Naples, we heard that an attack had been made by banditti on a diligence a few days previously in the Pontine marshes; that the passengers had been terrified by the fierce threats of the brigands, and robbed of everything they possessed. This was no very pleasant news for us, who had to traverse the same ground; but having no alternative, we assumed a courage if we had it not, and, protesting that we were none of us afraid, we set off. The first day's journey was delightful: we slept at Mola di Gaëta as before, and found to our great comfort that there were six carriages travelling the same road on the following morning.

The two most dreaded places, the mountains in the neighbourhood of Terracina and the Pontine marshes, were safely passed and without much

fear. We certainly did feel greatly shocked at seeing the horse which had been shot in the late affray lying dead by the roadside; but we pushed on valiantly, reaching Albano that night, and Rome early the following day. We are again settled in very comfortable lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna, and are in anxious expectation of the Holy Week.

Let me say a word or two more of Naples before we quite take leave of that beautiful city—that “pezzo del cielo caduto in terra.” Before we quitted it, the cold winds had given place to milder weather, and we began to see something of Neapolitan life. One evening in particular, I remember, tempted by the beauty of the weather we strolled out, and wandered along the Santa Lucia. The streets were crowded, as on a fair-day; shrill and discordant sounds of all kinds assailed our ears on every side; here Punch drew crowds to his little theatre with his nasal scream; there *Castagnari* stood crying their stewed chestnuts, and venders of fruit all equally vociferous. Proceeding further, we found amusement at every step; at one time we were detained by a long file of soldiers crossing the drawbridge of the Castle, to the sound of the evening drum; at another, a man would drive his *calesse* across our path, shouting “Co-ach, ma’am?”—the only English

words he knew. We walked to the Mole, where our steps were arrested every minute by the boatmen, who used all their eloquence in persuading us to employ them ; first trying their own graceful “ *Vuol ella una barca, Signora ?*” or the harsher tones of the French, “ *Madame, un bateau ?*” and when this failed, the appeal of “ *Want a bo-at, ma’am ?*” was more than once made to us.

As you walk along the streets, a man suddenly springs up at the sight of the *Inglese*, and in the hope of gaining a carlino, begins to devour his macaroni in that extraordinary manner so peculiar to the Lazzaroni, holding the long pipes high in the air, and letting them slip gently down his throat without mastication : it is amazing to see how much these men can devour, and how rapidly pipe after pipe disappears ; the labour is only suspended to attract attention by crying, “ *Mangia macaroni, Signora !*” Around the stands of the lemonade-sellers a motley group is generally assembled ; these little moveable shops are tastefully ornamented with festoons of oranges and lemons, bouquets of flowers, and paintings. The subjects of the latter are often curious enough : I have seen Moses striking the rock, Christ at the well with the woman of Samaria ; but the most extraordinary invitation to his customers was offered by one of these lemonade-venders, who, to recom-

mend the cooling refreshment of his beverage, had a representation of the souls in purgatory, surrounded by flames, and each busily sucking an orange.

How glorious was the Bay that evening as we returned home! calm and tranquil beneath the fast-fading light of day, its waves scarcely rippling to the shore, and its crystal surface broken only by the splashing oars of the boatmen returning home. The mountains were dimly outlined in the distance, and Vesuvius appeared gleaming with a strange and fearful light. We lingered abroad till late that evening, for we were soon to leave this lovely scene; and it was sad to think that Naples, with its beautiful shores, its busy streets, its strange sights and gay inhabitants, would soon be to us as a scene which had passed from our sight for ever.

Rome, April 15th.

I HAVE kept back my letter, in order to give you an account of the Holy Week, which is just ended. We have been very fortunate in seeing and hearing all that we most desired, and have suffered as little from fatigue as possible under such continued excitement. On Palm-Sunday the ceremonies begin, and early in the morning we took our places in the Sistine Chapel, in the enclosure

appointed for ladies. When the Cardinals had all arrived, each with his retinue of priests and servants, and the Pope had taken his seat on the throne, the ceremony of blessing the palms began. Every dignitary of the church, and the secular princes and ambassadors, officers and gentlemen, who were to join in the procession, then kneeling received a palm from the hand of his Holiness. This being ended, the procession moved out of the Sistine Chapel—the Pope borne in his chair of state on the shoulders of twelve men, preceded by Cardinals, and followed by the rest of his suite. All this gorgeous train, this ostentatious display of rank and power, this “pride of wealth and pomp of state,” was to commemorate the entrance of the meek and lowly Jesus into Jerusalem!

When all had left the Chapel, the doors were closed; after a pause of some minutes, the choir stationed outside chanted a few solemn chords, and a loud knocking was heard at the door: admission was claimed for the procession, and they returned. Then the “Passione” was sung by the whole choir, and the ceremony concluded.

The first “Miserere” is sung on Wednesday evening; we attended the service, but found that the music was not, as we had expected, by Allegri; and although beautiful, it produced little effect upon me. When it was concluded, we went to

the Trinità dei Pellegrini. In this establishment pilgrims are received during the Holy Week ; they are fed, lodged, and waited upon by persons of the highest rank. These pilgrims have interested me very much ; during the week preceding the last, they have been arriving in Rome every day ; the men dressed in large oil-skin capes, enormous hats with cockle-shells ; the women in various costumes—all bearing staves and scrips. They come from distant countries, some to perform penance for themselves, some as proxies for the crimes of others ; many are prompted to undertake the journey by motives of mere curiosity, whilst others come to confess crimes to the Cardinal Penitentiary, which he alone has power to absolve.

Upon presenting ourselves at the door, we learned for the first time that tickets of admission were necessary ; and we were on the point of turning away, when the Principessa Chigi came forward, and at our earnest request to be allowed to enter—being, as one of our party urged, “ *anche noi pellegrini da un paese ben lontano* ”—she most politely and kindly admitted us, and introduced us to a beautiful girl, charging her to show us every attention. The scene was a most interesting one ; after prayers had been read in the small chapel, each pilgrim was conducted by a

Sorella to the room in which the ceremony of the *Lavanda*, or washing of feet, was to take place. The Sisters were all dressed alike, in black silk gowns, with scarlet aprons, on which was a badge with the letters I H S, and the cross, in silver or some inferior metal. The only thing which marked a difference in rank was the hair, which in some was carelessly arranged, in others beautifully dressed with gold chains and simple ornaments. There was an elegance and dignity in the manners of some of the younger Sisters which indicated high birth, and a certain pride in the performance of the most menial offices that bespoke the Roman patrician. The gentle and graceful ease with which our fair cicerone entered into conversation with us was perfectly fascinating, and there was something in her countenance that showed sorrow had been there, and, without marring its beauty, had given it a peculiar expression of tenderness and grace.

Around the room were placed high benches, on which the pilgrims were seated. Before each was a tub, supplied by pipes with hot and cold water: a lady knelt beside, and washed and dried the feet of her charge; every foot was then kissed, and while this part of the duty was little relished by the younger and gayer members, many seemed to perform it as a kind of penance fervently and

devoutly. The feet of those who had suffered from the stones, or from walking barefoot so many weary miles, were carefully plastered and bound up by an attending surgeon, and then all were led to the supper-hall. Here long tables were laid out, at which the pilgrims were placed. The Princess Chigi stood at the top of the room, and gave out from a large smoking caldron rations of soup, which were conveyed by the Sisters to the pilgrims, before each of whom was placed a plate of fish, and another of bread, figs and apples, besides wine. We were very tired, and left soon after supper began, but the labours of the gentle *Sorelle* do not end until they have made the beds for their guests, and left them to repose.

I forgot to tell you that, as we were standing in the supper-hall, a party of gentlemen came in, dressed in the costume of the brothers of the establishment—a loose red gown of glazed calico; they were cardinals and princes, and amongst them Don Miguel was pointed out to us.

Rome, April 21st.

THURSDAY was a fatiguing and exciting day: we were in St. Peter's by nine o'clock, and with difficulty obtained seats to see the *Lavanda*, for, although this ceremony does not take place until noon, the transept in which it is performed was

crowded even at that early hour. I found little to compensate for our weary waiting, in seeing the Pope wash the feet of twelve priests, who personated the Apostles, and I shall not attempt to describe the ceremony. We did not follow the crowds who rushed to see his Holiness wait on the same priests at their dinner, but quietly went up to the Pauline Chapel. It was hung with black, and but partially lighted with the hundreds of wax tapers which burned around. Beneath the altar was a figure of Christ lying in the tomb; and when we entered, there was such a profound death-like stillness that we scarcely dared to breathe. The pavement was strewn with kneeling figures, all in black, and every head was bowed to the ground as if by a sense of unworthiness to look upon so holy an object.

At three o'clock we were again at St. Peter's, and took our station near the door of the Sistine Chapel. We were soon surrounded by people, chiefly English: after waiting some time, we succeeded in obtaining seats, and sat in patient expectation of the "Miserere." You know how my father exhorted me to omit no opportunity of hearing Palestrina's music sung at Rome, especially the celebrated service by Palestrina and Allegri, the two great fathers of the Roman school of music; and you may imagine how impatiently

I now waited to hear the most striking part of it—the "Miserere."

The service which precedes the "Miserere" began at four o'clock, and it was not until half-past six that the heavy, tedious sound of the chanting ceased. It was now twilight; one by one the lights were extinguished; a death-like silence succeeded, and prepared us for what was coming. Then began in soft and plaintive sounds that strain of penitential woe, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord!" It rose louder and louder, with such a gentle and almost imperceptible swell as I had never before heard; then as gradually it died away, until I feared to draw my breath lest I should lose a sound. I never till then knew the power of music upon the feelings; mine were completely overpowered, and my thoughts were so entirely absorbed, and every sense but that of hearing so lost, that I forgot where I was and everything around me. It was like a dream, but a dream from which it was pain to awake.

Good Friday is a day of less spectacle than any other during the week. At one o'clock we went to the Church of Jesus to hear the "Tre Ore." This is a religious service of a far more dramatic character than any we had before witnessed. The seven last words of our Saviour are made the texts of a series of meditations and discourses.

But I must describe more minutely this most singular and at times impressive service. On a raised platform, with a table before him, sat a venerable, grey-haired Jesuit, and in a pulpit beneath him was a young priest. The choir, accompanied by the organ, sang a hymn; after which the elder Jesuit rose, and discoursed on the event which they celebrated that day, and ended by reciting in a low and solemn voice the words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" He then sat down, and the young priest read from a printed book a kind of meditation on this text. Suddenly the Jesuit started up, and, interrupting the other in his recitative, began to preach. Well did he know how to work upon the feelings of his auditors; now rousing them to indignation by describing the agonies of our crucified Lord, now dissolving them in tears by recounting the benevolence and mercy which prompted such a sacrifice. Parts of the sermon were very fine; he spoke eloquently of the duty of forgiving our enemies, as we ourselves hope to be forgiven; it was delivered with a vehemence of manner and gesticulation we are little accustomed to in treating of such important subjects, but it produced its effect, even on us, heretics as we are. At length, embracing the crucifix, he said, "Let us prostrate ourselves before God!" Then

all the assembled multitude fell on their knees, and a prayer of much fervour succeeded. The organ played again, while the people still knelt; and this was followed by an ejaculatory prayer, which the people repeated, sentence by sentence, after the priest, amidst loud groans and sobs. All I remember of this prayer were these words; "Credo in Dio: spero in Dio: amo Dio sopra tutte le cose: mi dolgo di averlo offeso; mi propongo di non offenderlo mai più. Amirabilissima Maria, madre di Dio, avvocato dei peccatori, prega per noi!"* The priest then pronounced another sentence, and the same ceremony was repeated seven times.

On Friday evening the relics are displayed from a gallery of the dome of St. Peter's, and the Pope goes in state to do homage to them. We could see nothing of the relics, which are enshrined in precious stones; they consist, we are told, of a portion of the true Cross, the San Sudario, and the lance which pierced the side of our Saviour on the cross. St. Peter's looked more grand by this light than I had ever seen it; candles were burning on some of the altars, like

* "I believe in God: I trust in God: I love God above all things: I grieve that I have offended Him: I purpose to offend Him no more. O much-to-be-admired Mary, mother of God, advocate of sinners, pray for us!"

stars in a dark night; while on other parts the departing day-light fell, just revealing the outlines of the architecture, and leaving imagination to supply the rest. We remained until every one had departed, and no one can conceive what the quiet solemnity of that glorious church then was; it was a moment for a worshiper of the Father to feel his presence, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

On Saturday nothing occurred, except that Rome was kept alive by the ringing of all its bells and firing of all its guns. This is a general rejoicing, to commemorate the resurrection of Christ; for they begin to celebrate this event on Saturday, as they begin to mourn on Thursday.

Easter Sunday is a grand day; high mass is performed in St. Peter's by the Santo Padre, accompanied by precisely the same ceremonies as those performed on Christmas day. Having already described these*, I will take you to the booths erected outside the colonnade in the Piazza, from which spot we were to see the Pope give his benediction. The Piazza was filled with carriages; the soldiers formed a hollow square immediately beneath the steps leading up to the church, which were covered with thousands of

* See vol. i. p. 169.

people—pilgrims waiting for this blessing as the reward of their weary journey—foreigners from all parts, assembled from motives of curiosity—monks, friars, soldiers and peasants in their pretty costumes—forming a gay and beautiful picture. The Pope, attended by his Cardinals, appeared on the centre balcony in the front of St. Peter's, borne in his chair of state, and wearing his triple crown: the vast multitude fell prostrate, the soldiers grounded their arms, and a stillness as of death followed. The Pope rose up, uttered a short prayer, inaudible to all below, and stretching out his arms, as if to embrace the whole world in his paternal benediction, made the sign of the cross many times in the air; after which he dropped amidst the crowd indulgences granted by him; you may imagine the rush which was made to catch these. At this moment the bells rang, the trumpets sounded, the guns at Sant' Angelo fired, and a loud and deafening shout arose from the crowd. It was a magnificent sight—one unrivaled in the world.

The illumination of St. Peter's, which takes place on the evening of Easter Sunday, is as singular as it is beautiful. At first the dome, façade, and colonnades were merely outlined by rows of small paper lanterns, their tiny lights looking like strings of gold beads: as it grew darker, these

shone brighter and brighter, while the mass of the stupendous edifice was left in obscurity. This lasted an hour, when, as the clock struck eight, (one o'clock by Italian time,) a brilliant light glided rapidly to the top of the cross, and in one moment, as if by magic, every part burst into light—dome, cross, columns, statues, all became one beautiful blaze; the whole Piazza was illuminated, and every face distinctly seen.

This sudden and almost supernatural brilliancy is produced by the kindling of hundreds of fires, which are hung around the cupola at regular intervals. Large iron pots are filled with shavings, wood, resin, pitch, etc. Twenty-four men are suspended by strong ropes, passed round their bodies, from the upper gallery of the dome; previous to their engaging in this perilous undertaking, these men are locked up in a room in the Vatican, and fed on bread and water—a precaution which is taken to keep them from all excitement, or the temptation to drink wine, since the least giddiness of head would inevitably prove fatal. At the appointed time, as the clock strikes, every fire is lighted at the same instant, and thus the effect is produced which I have described.

After gazing as long as we wished at this strange and beautiful sight, we drove to the Pinian Hill, from which St. Peter's was a grand ob-

ject, standing out from the dark sky, and looking like a mighty tiara studded with gems.

The fireworks of Monday evening concluded the sights of the Holy Week. We had engaged a balcony directly opposite the Castle of Sant' Angelo, overhanging the Tiber, from which we had an admirable view. Having been misinformed as to the time when the Girandola was to begin, we reached our places long before the appointed hour; we found however much to amuse us. The river beneath was a scene of constant bustle; boats, filled with people of the poorer class, passed by in endless succession; some carried torches, and it was a pretty sight, in the increasing darkness, to see these bright lights gliding along, without any apparent guiding principle; the water, parted by the oars, sparkled as the light fell upon it; and the sound of merry voices, laughing or singing some well-known strain, continually met our ears. As these boats passed beneath our balcony, the red flickering light of the torches revealed many wild and picturesque-looking figures, in blue jackets and red caps, which, seen in the strong contrast of light and shade, reminded us of Gherardo delle Notte's pictures.

After waiting nearly an hour, we saw, by the increased bustle in the Castle, that preparations for the spectacle were in progress: lights flitted

to and fro, and presently the firing of a gun made us all turn intently towards the dark pile of building before us. First a volley of rockets, shooting high into the air, filled it with streams of light, and bursting scattered showers of brilliant sparks around; this was followed by an explosion, in imitation of an eruption of Vesuvius; torrents of flame spouted forth high above the Castle, the outlines of which were brought out, and the angel on its summit was seen standing in the midst of the blaze of light. The fire now ran along in lines, placed so as to form a castle of light; it shone like a fairy palace in the dark night, and as it faded away a fresh explosion illuminated the whole atmosphere around: then cascades of fire poured down, which were succeeded by new and fanciful devices. But it is vain to attempt a further description of this beautiful spectacle. I could not help thinking how surprized Adrian would be, could he have seen the use to which his mausoleum was applied that night. Now farewell!

LETTER IX.

Rome, April 24th.

I HAVE experienced during our journey no disappointment equal to that I felt on visiting Tivoli. We rose early yesterday morning, and were *en route* before seven o'clock. After driving about an hour and a half, we found that the coachman had taken a wrong road, having left Rome by the Porta Pia instead of the gate of San Lorenzo. There was no cross road by which we could get into our right track, and no remedy but to return to the very gates of the city and start afresh. It was most provoking to find ourselves at Rome again at the very hour we had purposed to have reached Adrian's Villa. However in three hours more we alighted at the place of destination. There were so many parties visiting the ruins at the same time, that all the guides were engaged, and we were committed to the charge of a pretty little girl of about eight years old, who proved to be a most pleasant cicerone. It was

a relief to be free from the officiousness and ignorant pertinacity so common among the regular guides to these places. Our *fanciullina* told us the names of the ruins; and when, in the wicked desire of bewildering the little creature, I asked her questions about the emperor Adrian and the gods and goddesses, whose names she repeated so glibly, she quietly replied, “Non ne conosco niente; ripeto solamente i nomi che mi s’ insegnano*.”

This Villa, in the magnitude and beauty of its ruins, strikingly exhibits the lavish prodigality of the Roman emperor. Its remains extend over a surface of three miles, and it appears to have comprised treasures from all parts of the world. Adrian collected during his travels, from every country he visited, materials for enriching his favourite retreat; theatres, temples, libraries, porticos, were erected, after the models of those which he had seen in Greece, Egypt, etc.; the walls were adorned with frescos, the floors with mosaics, and innumerable statues graced the halls. These have been removed, and the ruins alone remain, scattered amidst trees and shrubs in picturesque groups, and wreathed with creeping plants; whilst the turf is enamelled with beau-

* “I do not know anything of them; I only repeat the names that are taught me.”

tiful wild flowers, amongst which the graceful cyclamen grows in abundance. It was a glorious day, and we thoroughly enjoyed strolling through the walks and groves which led from one ruin to another.

We then ascended the hill at the foot of which this villa stands, and entered Tivoli. This place has been a favourite subject with painters, and the pictures and engravings I have seen had led me to imagine it a kind of terrestrial paradise. The exquisite little temple of the Sibyl is represented as embosomed in trees, crowning a hill, while the Anio boils and foams beneath. Now turn to the reality, stripped of poetical illusion. Pushing our way through a narrow, disagreeable street, amongst crowds of ragged urchins and importunate beggars, we reached a building, which, on looking up, I recognized as the temple; but so concealed amidst linen, hung to dry on its very walls, and so dirty, that we were glad to make good our retreat, and descend the rock on which it stands to the cascade and grottos. The former is so beautiful, so graceful in its form, that one quite forgets it is not a natural waterfall: the Anio is led in an artificial channel for some distance, its course having been diverted from the town which it was undermining, until it reaches the edge of this rock and precipitates itself into

the basin beneath. The waters have made for themselves another outlet, and fall through a hole in the hill into a cavern called the Grotto of Neptune, where, as they bound from rock to rock, the sound reverberates through its arched roof with a hoarse and almost stunning noise.

When we had satisfied ourselves with looking at these caverns and waterfalls, we walked to the Villa of Mæcenæ, at a short distance from the town. The ruins are uninteresting, but the view from them is very fine, extending over the wide plains of the Campagna, with Rome in the distance.

Rome, April 28th.

IN one of our last evenings in Rome, we were tempted by a glorious moon to wander amidst the ruins of the ancient city. There is something in the moonlight of these southern countries indescribably beautiful; it is the light of fairy-land: so brightly does the queen of night shine in the clear deep azure of heaven, that every object is seen distinctly as in day; yet is there such mildness and purity in her beams, that the soul is filled with dreams of everything peaceful and lovely; for if "memory and moonlight go together," and if the mind be tinged with melancholy, it is that "daintie sweet melancholy" which is the enemy of earthly cares, the friend of holy contemplation.

How beautiful were the ruins seen beneath the pale yet brilliant moonbeams—the deep shadows, the dark masses of the buildings, relieved by that soft and gentle light ! Every one speaks of the Coliseum by moonlight, and perhaps this glorious monument of ancient times never looks so imposing as at night ; but it must be seen before the moon has risen too high, while it is still below the old walls, and only peeps in at the arches and the loop-holes which time has made.

Having seen the pride of ancient Rome, we drove to St. Peter's, the glory of the modern city. The piazza was beautiful, with its dome, its colonnades and fountains ; there was not a sound but the murmuring of falling waters, and not a human being visible but ourselves : we stood gazing on this mighty work of man's creation, alone with Heaven.

Terni, May 10th.

WE were detained in Rome for some days by illness, and only reached this city last Saturday. Before I say anything of Florence, let me tell you of our delightful journey. Why people, who have the choice of the two roads from Florence to Rome, ever travel by Siena and Montefiascone, I am puzzled to conceive ; unless indeed unfortunate travellers who, like ourselves, only learn the

difference by experience. The one route presents little but wild uncultivated plains, barren volcanic regions of hills, bad accommodation and comfortless inns; while the other road, by Terni and Perugia, offers a succession of romantic scenery, interesting towns, and comparatively-speaking good hotels.

On Saturday, May the 9th, we left Rome. Perhaps if I were to tell you what I felt in quitting this city, you would laugh at me. Rome is one of the few spots on earth to which I cling with affection, if I may so express myself, and it will live in my heart while memory lasts. I cannot describe the feelings which weighed my spirits down as we drove along its streets for the last time; everything looked so beautiful in the freshness and quiet of the early morning, and I was full of sadness as we passed beneath the gate, by which five months before I had entered Rome, giddy with anticipations of pleasure. But it will not all pass away from me: when returned to my own country in the north, I shall delight to recall scenes fraught with such interesting and happy recollections, and shall live over again pleasures, which, as I quitted Rome, seemed fled for ever.

We reached Civita Castellana the first night, passing through Nepi. Both these towns are romantically situated, overhanging deep richly-

wooded glens, through which flow little mountain streams, crossed by noble bridges. We arrived at Terni by two o'clock today, after a journey of only seven hours. Our road through Narni led us into the recesses of the Apennines, which are covered with wood to their summits, now bright in the fresh hues of spring.

At Terni we dined, and then proceeded in a little open carriage to the cascade, situated at some distance from the town. By the help of huge grey oxen, we were drawn to the summit of a mountain, to see the waterfall from this point first. This is the most beautiful cascade I have ever seen ; the volume of water is very great, and falling down a height of three hundred feet into a deep basin, it rebounds with a loud noise, and fills the air with spray—

“ And thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground.”

Bright rainbows span the flood, or spring from the very midst of the boiling waters, “ bearing serene their brilliant hues.”

By a pretty walk, cut through the rocks and trees, we descended to the valley, turning round every few minutes to see the cascade from different points. We then crossed the river by a

natural bridge of stone, and, climbing the other side of the glen, had a more distant view of the waterfall: the river ran dashing and foaming along the valley, over masses of rock which impeded its course and formed a hundred miniature cascades. Our pleasure had been greatly marred by a tribe of the worst description of beggars, who followed us everywhere; in vain we expostulated, and endeavoured to drive them away. At length, wearied by their ceaseless importunity, we called the guide to our aid, who, invoking the assistance of the Madonna and St. Antonio, and administering the efficacious bribe of two paoli, soon rid us of this annoyance. Left alone to the quiet enjoyment of the scene, we could scarcely persuade ourselves to quit a spot so lovely; but evening warned us to return, and we hastened back to the little village where the carriage awaited us. A narrow and rocky pathway, bordered with flowering shrubs, and overshadowed by lofty trees, led us to the valley, through which the Velino was quietly pursuing its way.

The drive back to Terni was delightful; the sun had set, but in the west brilliant streaks of gold marked where his course had been, while the mountains were shrouded in a rich violet light. From the town arose the sound of the evening bell; and soon we met many a bright-eyed *conta-*

dina, in her pretty costume, returning from the festa which had been held in Terni in honour of the Madonna. It was the Ave Maria, the hour of twilight, and Byron's lines were in my thoughts—

“ Ave Maria ! blessed be the hour !

The time, the clime, the spot where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power

Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft ;
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,

Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer ! ”

LETTER X.

Florence, May 16th.

IN our journey the next day we rested at Spoleto, and, in spite of a burning sun, we toiled up the steep ascent to see the Cathedral, a building of the middle ages, with a curious portico, and containing frescos by Filippo Lippi. Without the walls of this city stands a noble Roman aqueduct, which we had not time to visit, but it forms a fine object in the lovely valley in which Spoleto is situated. Pursuing our route, we stopped at the little temple of Diana which overhangs the river Clitumnus—that temple “of small and delicate proportion,” which claims attention as much from its situation as its beauty. The oxen which grazed on the banks of this river were famed for their milky whiteness, and were in ancient times kept for sacrifices in the temples: Virgil alludes to them in his *Georgics*. This Pagan temple is now converted into a Christian chapel, dedicated I

believe to the Madonna; the front, which faces the river, is supported on small twisted columns; seen from the opposite bank, it must be a beautiful object; Poussin has introduced it in one of his landscapes. We reached Foligno in time to see one or two churches, and take a moonlight walk on its ramparts.

On Tuesday we had a most delightful journey. Having been advised by a friend in Rome not to leave Assisi unvisited, and as our road led us within about two miles of that town, we determined to walk thither while our horses baited, for we again travelled with Vetturino horses. Leaving the carriage, therefore, at La Madonna degli Angeli, we set forward. We had a steep hill to climb, and the day was intensely hot; but the church and convent of San' Francesco were in sight, and forgetting our fatigue we pressed on. These buildings stand on the edge of a lofty rock, and are seen for many miles around; I do not remember to have read any account of this church, and yet few objects have struck me more. There are, in fact, three churches, built one over the other: the lowest is hollowed in the solid rock; the second is supported on arches, which viewed at a distance have a fine and singular effect, and the whole is crowned by a semi-gothic building surmounted by a tower.

We first visited the upper church—a spacious aisle spanned by a single arch: the walls are covered with frescos by Cimabue and Giotto; I regret that time did not permit us to examine these celebrated remains of early art*. Descending to the second church, we were awe-struck as the door opened; the interior was perfectly dark to us, coming from the full blaze of an Italian noon-day sun. In the far distance we heard the solemn chanting of the Requiem, which the friars were performing over the body of a departed brother. We descended a long flight of steps; our eyes gradually became accustomed to the faint glimmering of light which the funereal tapers shed around, and by degrees we discovered the friars in their dark dresses, and the priests officiating at the altar.

There was an awful and almost fearful solemnity in the scene—those unearthly voices, now dying away in the plaintive strain of the “*Lacrymosa*,” now swelling loud in the tremendous “*Dies Iræ*.” Sweet female voices, mingling from time to time with the harsher chanting of the friars, filled the subterranean arches with rich and beautiful harmony. I could scarcely breathe—it was as if a spell were on me. Soon, however, the sounds

* An account of them will be found in Kugler’s *Hand-Book of the History of Painting*.

ceased ; the last rites were performed, and, as we stood, a long train of nuns, all closely veiled, passed us. Then friars flitted past, and soon the church was silent as the grave.

We were then conducted to the lower church, where repose the bones of San' Francesco of Assisi, the founder of the Order of Franciscans. This church is comparatively modern, and not very interesting. Finding that the hour we had appointed for our return was long past, we descended the hill quickly to La Madonna degli Angeli ; there we saw a fine church, which is built over a small brick house, rough in its exterior, but deemed most sacred, having been inhabited by San' Francesco at the time he first formed the rules of the order of friars who were afterwards called by his name. Over the door was a fresco by Overbeck, a German artist of great talent now resident in Rome. I had seen many engravings from his paintings, and been charmed with the beauty of the composition, and the grace and expression of his figures ; my expectations as to his paintings had been raised by the extravagant praise which I had heard bestowed upon them, but I confess that to me his colouring seemed cold and feeble.

That night we reached Perugia. In our evening walk about the town, we encountered in one of

the churches an ancient duenna, who was escorting three beautiful young girls in their promenade. We inquired of them our way to San' Francesco, and they offered to accompany us with so much gentleness and courtesy, that we could not refuse their kindness. These "belle Perugine" were very pleasing in their manners and intelligent in their remarks; they seemed delighted to speak of England, and learn from us anything of English customs and habits, being greatly amused when they differed from their own. We prolonged our walk, to see the beautiful view beyond the walls of the city, and then parted from our gentle guides with many expressions of thanks.

Perugia was anciently the strongest city in Etruria, and so renowned were its inhabitants for valour, that Hannibal did not venture to attack it.

Our next day's journey brought us to the Lake of Thrasimene, famous for the victory obtained on its shores by Hannibal over the Romans. As we descended the hill which led to the village of Passignano, where we intended to dine, we overtook a priest, who accosted us politely, and gave us the information we requested respecting the supposed position of the armies during the dreadful battle. He pointed out to us the small village, and a river, which have both retained the name of Sanguinetto,

given to them from the deluge of Roman blood poured out on that spot.

“ A brook hath ta'en
(A little rill of scanty stream and bed)
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain,
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Met the red earth and turn'd the unwilling waters red *.”

We also saw the heights said to have been occupied by the Carthaginian troops, whence they rushed down on the Romans, who, hemmed in by the lake on one side and the mountains on the other, fell an easy prey to their fierce antagonists. The tales which are related on the spot respecting this famous battle may be in part traditionary, but the site which is pointed out agrees with the accounts of historians.

The charm which travelling gives to history is indescribable: history we read and study as a record of what is past and remote; distance of time and place separates us from the events and actors in the drama, and seems to throw an air of fiction over truth; it charms and interests, but it does not draw us into the nearest circle of human sympathy. But when we go abroad, and visit the spots where the events we have read of actually took place, history wears a new aspect; it becomes

* Childe Harold.

truth, realized by our own personal observation; and although the struggles of the Romans and Carthaginians took place nearly two thousand years ago, yet the sight of the very ground upon which they probably fought confirms to our minds the truth of the narrative, and identifies the reality of events with the scene before our eyes.

“ Far other scene is Thrasimene now !
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough.”

The scenery around the lake is lovely—its glassy surface hemmed in by lofty hills, clothed with rich woods, which give an air of sylvan and secluded beauty to the landscape.

Passignano is a wretched little village; and the inn could furnish so scanty a repast, that we were glad to quit it and resume our journey. The day was oppressively hot, and as we were listlessly reclining in the carriage, our attention was aroused by some one addressing us at the window. At first we thought it was one of the numerous beggars who constantly beset travellers; but peeping out, we saw a fine-looking boy, who, keeping pace with us as we ascended a hill, told our servant, who would have driven him away, that he had “ *Una predica, una bellissima predica per le gentilissime Signore**.” He then began reciting

* “ A sermon, a most beautiful sermon for the gentle ladies.”

a sermon; I was too much amused with his gesticulations and graceful manner, and delighted with his beautiful pronunciation, to attend to the substance of his discourse. When he ended, we gave him a trifling coin, asking him what he would do with it; he assured us that he would add it to the store he was laying by, to purchase for himself an *Ufficio*, or set of prayers addressed to the Virgin; he told us also how much he desired to be a friar, and would when he was older; and how the “signor Curato” taught him to preach. He was a fine lad, and excited our interest by his frank manner and almost noble bearing.

We rested that night at Castiglione Fiorentino, a town situated in the most luxuriant country. Tempted by the exquisite beauty of the evening, we wandered out, and from the higher part of the town, skirting it on a broad terrace-walk, we looked down on the lovely valley of the Chiana, one of the most fertile spots in all Italy. The vineyards, with their graceful foliage and trellis-work, covered the hills, amongst which we saw in the distance Monte Pulciano, famous for its delicious wine. The fields beneath us, so rich in produce, promised an abundant harvest; and it was impossible for the mind not to contrast this well-cultivated country with the bare, neglected dominions of the Pope, which we had just quitted.

The people, too, in Tuscany have a totally different appearance from the squalid and poverty-stricken inhabitants of the Papal dominions; they are clean, healthy, and happy-looking: we could but attribute this change in the peasantry to the better system of government adopted by the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Our journey on Thursday presented no feature of any interest, until we reached Arezzo. For a time we quitted the wide open plains, and pursued a road enclosed between hedge-rows of hawthorn, which were now in full blossom. There was something like England in the quiet scenery, and the sweet perfume of the hedges gave us a home feeling, so grateful at all times to the wanderer in distant lands. As we reached Arezzo early, we resolved to devote some hours to seeing this ancient town. The streets are wide, and the houses have an air of greater comfort than in any city we have seen since leaving Rome. We visited the cathedral and some other churches; the former, a building of the thirteenth century, is a noble and venerable structure, and contains some curious specimens of art at the time of its revival in Italy. The semi-gothic architecture is imposing, and its effect would be solemn, were it not marred by the paintings on the ceilings and the gaudy decorations of the altars.

In a street through which we passed on our return to the hotel, we were shown the house in which Petrarca was born ; upon it is a long Latin inscription, giving an account of his life and misfortunes.

It was a fair day in Arezzo, and the streets were crowded with people ; the women here wear large round beaver hats ; in other respects their costume is not singular. In a wide open piazza a great number of people were collected around a carriage, which was drawn up on one side ; two liveried servants were in attendance, one of them playing on a clarionet to attract attention. Inside the carriage was a man, evidently the master of this singular equipage, in whom we speedily recognized one of the *Ciarlatani** of Italy, an itinerant professor of surgery. We stopped to watch the proceedings of this curious personage : the patients, as they presented themselves, were placed on a stool beside the carriage-door ; the man then, with a face of profound wisdom, proceeded to examine the part offered to his inspection ; sometimes a cut on the hand was bound up, sometimes an eye examined ; one poor little boy was placed

* Hence comes our term *Charlatan*—a mountebank or quack. *Mountebank* is derived from the Italian words, *montare*, to mount, and *banco*, a scaffold or platform, on which the tricks of these itinerant quacks were performed.

on the chair, and, almost before he knew what was to happen, had two teeth extracted. We found that this man, who was a native of Arezzo, spent much of his time in travelling from country to country. In a kind of address or lecture, which he delivered to the crowd, he spoke of his journeys into France, Germany, and all parts of Italy : he now and then returns to Arezzo, to confer on his fellow-citizens the benefit of his profound knowledge and skill. He professed to give advice gratis, but we saw him carefully eyeing a small money-box, into which he evidently expected each patient to drop some paoli.

This fellow calls to mind Chaucer's admirable description of "the Doctor of Physik," who was a "practysour" of the same craft.

“ With us there was a Doctor of Physik,
 In al the worldé was ther non hym lyk,
 To speke of Physik and of Surgerye,
 For he was groundit in Astronomy.
 * * * * *
 He knew the cause of every maladye,
 Were it or hot or cold, or moist or drye,
 Where they engendere, and of what humour,
 He was a veray parfytt practysour ;
 The cause yknowe, and of his harm the rote,
 Anon he yaf to the syk man his bote.
 Ful redy had he his apothecaryes,
 To sendyn him his droggis and letewaryes.
 * * * * *
 Of his diete mesurable was he,
 For it was non of superfluite,

But of gret nuryschyng and digestible :
His study was but lytyl in the Bible.
In sanguyn and in perse he clad was al,
Lined with taffata and with sendal ;
And yit he was but esy of dispence,
He kepté that he won in pestelence ;
For gold in physik is a cordial ;
Therefore he loved gold in special."

After dinner we continued our route, and reached Monte Varchi that night. The Apennines, which we have had in view ever since we left Rome, became in this last day's journey more lofty and grand ; wide and lovely plains stretched to their base, while the foreground, at times broken and undulating, was scattered with cottages and villas of a truly Italian character. Long trellis-walks, covered with vines, ran in some places along the road, and numberless little streamlets added to the beauty of this delicious country: in these we often saw women engaged in washing linen; they formed pretty groups, standing in the water, beating the clothes with stones, or dipping them in the clear stream ; others spread the linen out to dry on the pebbly shore, or hung it on the neighbouring bushes ; while children sported around, and the sound of their merry voices met us in laughing cadence as we passed rapidly by. I must now lay down my pen ; in my next letter I shall tell you more of Florence, where we arrived yesterday.

LETTER XI.

Florence, May 23rd.

WE are enjoying our second visit to this delightful city even more than we did our former one, when a cold biting November wind and heavy rain gave us no favourable opportunity of seeing the real beauty of Florence. It appears now like a new town to us; everything wears a cheerful aspect; the country around is luxuriant in its summer dress, and the people all bright and joyous; it seems a perpetual holiday.

The heat of the day is almost insupportable, and the Italians remain close prisoners to the house all day, protected from the burning rays of the sun by verandahs and blinds of every kind. At night they quit their retreats, and come out with the fire-flies, seeking the refreshing cool of the evening in company. The Cascine, their favourite resort, is a public park and gardens, shaded with forest-trees, and spreading out into long and spacious meadows, intersected by pleasant drives and

walks ; it is of great extent. When the sun sets, carriages repair in crowds to this delicious spot ; some drive through the green alleys, while others draw up in a wide open space, enjoying the means of intercourse with one another, and the scene is like a large *conversazione* in the open air.

We have spent our mornings in the Gallery or the palaces, amidst the treasures of art which Florence contains ; for, birds of passage as we are, we cannot afford to waste time in the *dolce far niente* of the Italians. In spite of the heat we sally forth, anxious to improve every moment ; when evening comes, we visit some one of the many delightful gardens with which Florence abounds. The Boboli Gardens, attached to the Pitti Palace, are open to the public, and offer a charming promenade : they cover a rather steep hill, the upper part of which commands a fine view of the city and country around. We visited them this evening as the sun was setting, and the whole of the Val d' Arno, with Florence seated in its bosom, was bathed in a golden mist.

We have made an evening excursion to Fiesole, a town more interesting to us from the beauty of its situation than from its antiquities. We were shown the old Etruscan walls, built without cement, and for a time we traced with pleasure the remains of former ages ; but it was on

the splendid view from the hill on which Fiesole stands that we gazed with unsated delight. Our mode of ascending this hill was amusing ; the carriage could not mount the steep and rocky acclivity, and we prepared to climb it on foot,—a formidable task to those who are not very strong. Much however to our satisfaction, we were told of a machine which was sometimes used by parties ; we ordered it, and when the splendid equipage made its appearance, it was hailed with a hearty laugh : fancy a kind of basket, containing two seats, set on narrow planks of wood, and drawn by two large grey oxen. Partly from the oddity of the thing, and partly because it was our only resource, we entered our triumphal car, and soon reached the summit of the hill in safety.

On our return to Florence we passed Schifanoia, the villa which Boccaccio has made the scene of his *Decamerone*, and saw the little stream of the Mugnone which he describes. We were told by a friend here, that several years ago, while the house which Boccaccio occupied in Florence was undergoing repair, some manuscripts of his were discovered behind a wall ; unfortunately they fell into the hands of a bigoted and ignorant priest, who, frightened at some irreverent expressions they contained, relative to the Pope and the Holy See, remorselessly committed them to the flames,

thus destroying the last memorial of the great “bard of prose.”

The Gallery is a never-failing source of delight to us ; we visit it continually, and I feel how much more I am now prepared to appreciate its treasures of sculpture and painting. As I again behold the Venus de’ Medici, the Dancing Faun, the Listening Slave, and all the statues and pictures in this noble collection, I feel that I but feebly recognized their excellence before ; new beauties seem to reveal themselves, and the impressions of delight which they awaken are too powerful to be described. When the beautiful in Art is constantly presented to the eye, the mind insensibly acquires a truer perception of its high purposes and powers ; its influence is felt, not only in an improved taste and sounder judgement, but in its effect on the heart and mind.

Unfolding itself gradually, the love of Art grows imperceptibly in our hearts, and abides there. I am inclined to think that this feeling would be much more universal, if the study of art were less shackled by wrong notions at the outset by the current and fluctuating prejudices of fashion. There is no taste really valuable and correct which is not permanent and fixed ; that which is beautiful is true, and truth is the same in all countries and in all ages. Thus, while we gladly accept the

results of the experience and better judgement of others as aids in forming our own opinions, we must avoid adopting any blindly. No opinions can be esteemed valuable but such as are arrived at by the exercise of the powers of our own minds and judgement; and it is to the disposition to escape from the trouble of thinking for ourselves, that much of the error prevailing in the world is attributable.

In viewing Michael Angelo's statues of Morning and Evening, Dawn and Twilight, I cannot yet pretend to understand or appreciate their excellence; this I must attribute (although with a sense of mortification) to my own want of perception or knowledge. They have been the subject of many eulogiums*, amongst which perhaps there is none so beautiful as the following well-known lines by Strozzi :

“ La Notte che tu vedi, in sì dolci atti
Dormire, fu da un Angelo scolpita
In questo sasso, e perchè dorme ha vita :
Destala, se nol credi, e parleratti! † ”

The still more beautiful reply which Michael

* Vasari says that many verses were written upon these statues, both in Latin and Italian, by “ very learned men.”

† “ The Night which thou see'st sleeping so gently in this stone was sculptured by an angel (Angelo); and, because she sleeps, has life. Awaken her, if thou believest not, and she will speak to thee! ”

Angelo wrote under these lines, shows how acutely sensible he was of the misery and thralldom of his native city at that period :

“ Grato m’ è il sonno, e più l’esser di sasso,
Mentre che il danno e la vergogna dura.
Non veder, non sentir, m’è gran ventura,
Però non mi destar ! deh parla basso ! *”

One morning we visited the rooms in the Gallery containing the bronzes and gems ; amongst the latter are many specimens of the perfection to which Benvenuto Cellini carried the art of enchasing and setting these jewels ; there are three gold vases of exquisite workmanship, covered with precious stones. The cases which line this small apartment contain gems and curiosities of unrivalled value and beauty ; vases made from a single emerald or turquoise, small pillars of the richest onyx and sardonyx, and one enormous cat’s-eye ; these are magnificent of their kind, but they all yield in interest to the much greater works of art which this Gallery contains. Giovanni di Bologna’s beautiful Mercury, flying on the wind, is in this room ; for grace and ethereal lightness, this figure is almost without rival ; it seems really in motion, springing from earth to heaven.

* “ Grateful to me is sleep, still more to be of stone, whilst injury and shame prevail. To hear nothing, to feel nothing, is to me a great blessing ; therefore awaken me not : ah ! speak softly.”

In revisiting the churches of Florence, I feel their beauty still more sensibly than before we had seen those of Rome. The Santo Spirito is a noble building; the simple grandeur of its long and spacious aisles has something more pleasing to me than all the gorgeous decorations of the churches in Rome, where

“ Porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble,”

scattered with a lavish hand, and often combined with little taste, are hostile to the sentiments of devotion with which simplicity of architecture alone has affinity; even St. Peter's itself fails to inspire that solemn tranquil and religious feeling which steals over the mind in entering “the long-drawn aisles” of our own beautiful cathedrals. In most of the Florentine churches there is less of idle decoration, and they are in consequence more grand and imposing.

We have spent some hours this morning in the famous Laurentian Library, which is one of the most valuable depositories of ancient manuscripts in the world, containing upwards of nine thousand. We had a letter of introduction to the librarian, by whom we were received courteously, and permitted to examine some of these rare and valuable treasures of ancient literature.

The enormous volumes, in their venerable parch-

ment bindings, with gold or silver clasps, are arranged on desks, which project in rows from the wall on either side of the long room, down the whole length of which a passage is left. Before each desk is fixed a bench, and many of these were occupied by students; the ponderous tomes are chained to the desks—a custom which has been handed down from the remote times when these books were esteemed a still more rare and precious possession than at present. Many manuscripts of the fifteenth century were shown to us, and amongst them the *Divina Commedia*, the *Decamerone*, and a *Breviary* illustrated. The ancient illuminated manuscripts which are preserved in this library are very valuable, as specimens of an art to which we are apt to attribute too little importance.

Before the invention of printing, the copying of manuscripts was an art upon which the greatest pains were bestowed: the clearness and beauty of the writing is marvellous, and the labour and time which these works required rendered them extremely precious. The artist employed to ornament them with minute pictures and painted initial letters, was called the *illuminator*; the small painting was termed a *miniatura*, from the *minium*, or red lead, chiefly used in the ruder styles of the art. Thus you see that the art of miniature-paint-

ing, which was originally confined to the illustration of works as a subsidiary ornament, has been handed down to the present day as a distinct branch of painting.

The illumination of manuscripts was held in much repute as early as the eighth century; it was cultivated, with many branches of knowledge and science, by the monks in the retirement of their cells, and employed in the service of the church. Like the coarse mosaics in some of the old churches, and the specimens of fresco-painting found in the Catacombs, these paintings are rare and precious remains of ancient Christian art. Miniature-painting, or the illumination of books, assumed a greater importance on the revival of Art in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The artists now painted with better taste, and different brilliant colours (especially ultramarine) were used together with vermilion. The works they illuminated were principally rituals, missals and breviaries, and many artists in the higher walks of painting thus employed their talents: Ghirlandajo was one who carried it to great perfection.

The oldest manuscript in the Laurentian Library is a copy of Virgil of the third century, written in the time of the emperor Valens; it is in excellent preservation, with one leaf alone missing, which is in the Vatican; many others have been

made to the Pope for its purchase, but he cannot be induced to part with it. Perhaps the most interesting manuscript is that of the Pandects of Justinian. This famous code of Roman laws, which forms the basis of all modern jurisprudence, was discovered in 1137 at Amalfi, where, amidst the disturbances in Italy during the invasions of the northern hordes, it had been placed for safety; the manuscript belongs to the sixth century, and we can but marvel at the wonderful manner in which it has been preserved through so many centuries and vicissitudes; every letter is distinct, every paragraph legible. There are thirty folio volumes of the Pandects in this library; the other twenty, which complete the work, are, I believe, in the University of Pisa.

The finger of Galileo is preserved here in a glass case, and we saw also the celebrated letter of Dante, containing his refusal to return to Florence*.

Bologna, May 25th.

AFTER spending a week most pleasantly at Florence, we quitted it last Monday. Our journey that day led us over a lofty range of the Apennines, which in this part of Italy are of a barren and wild

* An extract from this noble letter is given in vol. i. p. 42.

character. We began to ascend almost from the very gates of Florence, and in about an hour after we had a glorious view of the city.

Looking at it thus perhaps for the last time, Florence seemed to me more beautiful than ever; the Duomo, the Campanile, and the lofty tower of the Palazzo Vecchio stood forth amidst the churches, houses and palaces, glittering in the morning light; while the hills, rising around like an amphitheatre, were covered with vineyards and olive plantations, from which peeped forth the villas of the Florentines. The city was soon lost to our view, as we slowly ascended the successive chains of hills, or were whirled briskly down their steep sides into the beautiful little valleys lying concealed amongst their recesses. At times, perched high on our mountain-road, extensive map-like views of the country opened on us; wide plains, land-locked by distant ranges of mountains, valleys in endless succession, narrowing into deep glens, or spreading into tracts of pasture-land.

We stopped—not rested—that night at Covi-
gliajo, a wild little village situated in the heart of the mountains. The inn at which we halted was as wretched a one as I have ever seen, more like an abode of banditti than a place in which weary travellers could hope to find rest and shelter. As

we entered through a dark kitchen, the bright blaze from an enormous fire on the hearth revealed to us figures which it required no stretch of fancy to imagine mountain-robbers—wild savage-looking men. Passing on, we ascended the narrow gloomy staircase and found ourselves in a large barn-like room, where, seated around long tables, busily engaged in their supper, were several vetturini and other men. Small lamps hanging from the ceiling served but to make the darkness visible, and cast the groups into deep shadow. Our saloon was one corner of this apartment, and we were only separated from the party occupying the larger share of the room by a curtain. Neither the loud voices of these men, nor the steam arising from their savoury messes, tended to increase the comfort of our miserable accommodations, and we early retired to our beds. To seek sleep was vain: no sooner had we vacated our corner of the sitting-room than it was invaded by a host of people, and, as our apartments opened from this nook, we found little rest. Before the nocturnal noises had well ended, those of the morning began; the stamping of horses, the grumbling of the vetturini, the rushing to and fro of heavy-footed maidens, drove all hopes of repose from our minds, and we gladly arose early to depart.

We felt the cold of this elevation severely after

the sultry heat of Florence ; snow had fallen in the neighbourhood of Covigliajo the evening before we arrived. The following day we stopped to rest our horses at a little inn called I Poggioli ; and while dinner was preparing we walked out, wandering through fields, scrambling down banks, and crossing little brooks. The sun was shining brightly, the birds singing, and flowers of the richest colours grew beneath our feet : all nature seemed bursting into life and beauty, refreshed by the late rains and gladdened by the sun's rays. I added more to my little *hortus siccus* during this walk than I had done for several months.

“ Fair Italy !

Even in thy desert what is like to thee ?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility ! ”

LETTER XII.

Bologna, May 27th.

THIS is a strange foreign-looking town, with its streets of arcades, its curious Piazza, leaning towers and old tombs standing in the open streets ; its general appearance is gloomy and deserted—the shadow of its former greatness remaining. We chanced to arrive at a remarkable time, for the city was unusually animated. A celebrated and very ancient Madonna, who generally resides at a church situated on a hill about three miles from Bologna, had just come to pay her annual visit to the city. She is received with all possible honour ; processions go out to meet her, and she is conducted to the different churches with great pomp. In order to facilitate her journey from St. Luca, a long covered walk or arcade has been built the whole way from Bologna to the church. The enormous expense of this erection is defrayed by contributions from various societies, civil and ecclesiastical.

The evening after our arrival we went to the Cathedral, which the Madonna was then leaving in order to visit the church of St. Petronio. The streets were thronged, and the soldiers with difficulty kept an open avenue for the passage of the procession. First came different orders of friars and secular fraternities, bearing crucifixes and tapers ; these were followed by a large kind of platform, borne on men's shoulders, covered with gold and silver tinsel, tapestry, and artificial flowers ; as it approached, every one knelt. We supposed it was the Madonna, and looking earnestly we discovered a large black doll in the centre of this erection. There was something so melancholy in the scene, that I turned from the universal demonstrations of joy with a heart-sickening feeling. While the people of Italy are slaves to such degrading superstitions, how can we hope to see this fair land free ? Liberty is the child of intelligence, and must be nursed in the pure and healthy atmosphere of truth and simplicity, or it will fade and die, even as it has died in Italy.

The Campo Santo here is a singular place : formerly a monastery of Carthusians, it was converted into a cemetery by Napoleon, at the time he destroyed the monasteries of Italy, and dispersed their lazy and profitless inhabitants. Amongst other wise regulations, he prohibited the burial of

the dead within the walls of any town ; and this place was chosen as appropriate, and easily adapted to the purpose for which it was required. The long corridors and halls are now lined with graves, the cloisters are surrounded by monuments, and the bodies, instead of being laid in the earth, are built into the walls, one tomb lying over another, as in the Catacombs at Rome.

The Accademia delle Belle Arti, in Bologna, is rich in treasures ; possessing some of the finest pictures of the masters of this celebrated school, which was the last to attain eminence in Italy, and has furnished the world with many of its finest painters.

After the death of Michael Angelo and Rafael, Art declined in Italy ; the schools were divided by party spirit and narrow views ; and while one faction declared that the true path to excellence could only be found in the study of the Antique, another contended that Nature alone was the guide to follow.

At this period arose the Caracci—men whose genius rescued Painting from the decay into which it was sinking ; they were the most eminent artists of the Eclectic school, of which, as opposed to that of the Naturalists, I have before told you*. Lu-

* See above, page 59.

dovico Caracci, and his two cousins Agostino and Annibale, having attentively studied the excellences of the various schools of Italy, endeavoured to unite them, and ultimately founded a new school of their own. Whilst they wisely directed their pupils to the careful examination of the works of the best masters, they equally inculcated the necessity of taking the antique and nature as models. Thus their school, having been the pupil of all others, became first in the art of teaching.

These three great artists appear to have been actuated by one common motive, the desire of redeeming Painting from the mannerism into which it had fallen; nor did they allow jealousy or self-love to mar their project or interrupt their harmony and friendship. Differing in their characters, they varied much also in the bent of their genius: in the compositions of Ludovico there is at times something approaching to the sublime; the fertile imagination of Agostino invested every subject with a beauty peculiar to himself; while the style of Annibale is characterized by scientific arrangement and dexterous execution.

Like Rafael, Annibale has three separate manners; the first, acquired under the instruction of his cousin Ludovico, is cold, and evinces a de-

fective knowledge of colouring and design ; this vanished as he became better acquainted with the works of his great predecessors, and his second manner is imbued with much of the sweetness and grace of Coreggio, (whose frescos at Parma had been his study and delight,) and something of the glowing harmony of colouring of the Venetian school. After his visit to Rome, Annibale's admiration for Rafael showed itself in the change perceptible in his style ; retaining his beauty of colouring and admirable powers of design, his paintings acquired an additional charm in the expression and truth which he threw into his countenances and compositions. "*Tutti i suoi attori agiscono come lo vuole l' azione**," is the high praise bestowed upon him.

Agostino excelled not only in painting ; he was a sculptor and musician, a philosopher and a mathematician ; he was inferior as an artist to his brother Annibale, both in colouring and design, but his works are highly esteemed. Having been employed by the Duke Ranuccio to paint several pictures, he was interrupted in their execution by death ; the Duke, sensible of his loss, refused to entrust their completion to any other artist, and filled the space left with an inscription

* "*All his actors act as the action requires.*"

written by Achillini in praise of Agostino. His son, Antonio Caracci, died at the early age of thirty-five, after having given promise of no small success as an artist. I have seen few of his works, but his frescos have been sometimes mistaken for those of his uncle Annibale.

Of all the illustrious pupils of the school instituted by the Caracci, none has attained to the eminence of Domenico Zampieri, surnamed "Il Domenichino." His talents were developed amidst a series of disappointments, arising chiefly from the malice and rivalry of his enemies : his first master was Calvart, the opponent of the Caracci, who, enraged to see his pupil abandoning his style, and profiting by the instruction of his rivals, beat and expelled him from his school. Domenichino gladly took refuge with Ludovico Caracci, and under his care the young artist began to put forth a promise of that excellence to which he subsequently attained. He went to Rome, and placed himself under Annibale, who was at that time engaged in painting the Farnese Palace. Annibale was astonished at his genius, and encouraged him to redouble his efforts. When engaged on a picture, Domenichino scarcely allowed himself time to eat his meals, so eagerly did he pursue his art. Annibale was struck with such admiration at the sight of a painting which he had just

finished, that he exclaimed, "Domenichino mio, oggi voglio imparare da voi ! * "

The envy of his rivals now began to show itself, nor was Agostino Caracci free from this meanness ; having one day called him an ox, his brother Annibale rebuked him, saying, " Questo bue lavora così bene, ed il suo terreno sarà così fertile, che un giorno alimenterà la pittura †." So powerful were the intrigues of his opponents, that Domenichino remained without employment ; and after completing his glorious picture of the ' Communion of St. Jerome' (now in the Vatican), he retired to Naples. Allured by the promise of a competence, he ventured into a city, at that time the scene of the most fearful cabals amongst artists ; many had perished by assassination and poison, and poor Domenichino had but small chance of a peaceful life. Before he had well commenced his labours he became the object of attack, and after enduring much suffering from terror of a violent death, he fell sick and died literally of a broken heart.

The rank which Domenichino holds amongst painters is one of the highest : in delineating the varying emotions of the human face he was unquestionably a great artist. The ' Communion of

* " Domenichino, today I will learn from you."

† " This ox labours so well, and his land will become so fertile, that it will one day nourish painting."

St. Jerome' is among his best pictures, and, in the opinion of some, contends for the palm of excellence with Rafael's 'Transfiguration.' It is now generally admitted that this praise is very much exaggerated : it was the fashion some time ago to extol Domenichino extravagantly, and fashion is seldom discriminating in its taste ; it was in this instance an injustice to this great painter, inasmuch as it was sure to lead to the opposite extreme of criticism, and to an injurious depreciation of his really high merits ; these fluctuations may be measured with the same regularity as those of the ocean—a high wave lifts the bark aloft, only to depress it lower than before.

Guido Reni is better known in England than Domenichino, and the exquisite sweetness and softness of his style cannot fail to win its way to the heart. There is a pathos in his paintings which is irresistible ; I have stood before some of them until my eyes were dim with tears, while others are full of life, radiance, and poetry. Marini says of him,

“ La man che forme angeliche dipinge,” *

and I think that earth could scarcely show the models of his youthful heads. The words of an ancient writer have been applied to Guido's fi-

* “ The hand which paints angelic forms.”

gures, that "in every step, in every action, Beauty secretly accompanies and animates them." How peculiarly is this true of his 'Aurora!'

Albani, another disciple of the school of the Carracci, is famous for that harmonious colouring, which sheds a charm over all his paintings. But he should have been content to choose his subjects from Pagan mythology, leaving Christianity to the higher class of minds: his little angels are all Cupids, and his Madonnas Venuses. Lanzi says he has been called the Anacreon of painting; and as well might that poet have written odes to the Virgin, as Albani have attempted to depict that pure feminine grace and dignity with which the artists of Italy invested their paintings of the mother of our Saviour.

The Bolognese school boasts another disciple whose name stands high amongst painters, and of whose works I knew little until I came to Italy—Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, commonly called Il Guercino da Cento*. He was not a pupil of the

* This name was given him from a cast in one of his eyes, which originated in the following circumstance. When a baby, as he was sleeping quietly one day, he was awakened by a sudden and violent noise; the terrified infant screamed, and stretched his eyes open so wide that one became fixed obliquely with the other; thenceforward he was called Il Guercino,—*guercio* signifying a person who squints. (See Baldinucci's "Notizie dei Professori del Disegno.")

Caracci, but, like them, he availed himself of the experience of his predecessors. The strength and vigour which he borrowed from Caravaggio was tempered by the study of Guido, whose delicacy he attempted to imitate; and if in his paintings we find less of dignity and elegance, the want is compensated by truth of expression, strength in composition, and grace in attitude. In his gorgeous oriental colouring we may trace a student of the school in which Paolo Veronese was a master.

Guercino was famous for his rapidity of pencil: it is related that he completed a figure of the Almighty in one night, by torchlight; on which occasion a friend observed, "*Giovanni, altri pittori fanno quanto possono, ma voi fate quanto volete**." It is pleasant, amidst the many examples of rivalry and jealous enmity we meet with in the personal history of artists, to see recorded the virtues of this eminent man. "He spoke well of all men; he never saw a picture without searching for something to commend; if undeserving of much praise, he spoke of it with moderation and respect: he rejoiced that every one should strive and do well: he died lamented by all†."

With the Caracci and their illustrious pupils the

* "*Giovanni, other painters do as much as they can, but you do as much as you will.*"

† Baldinucci's "*Notizie dei Professori del Disegno.*"

art of painting in Italy may be said to have expired ; its rapid decline may at least be dated from the period of their death.

Ferrara, May 28th.

IF Bologna seemed deserted, what shall I say of this town ? Its desolate streets recall to my mind the fairy-tale of the city whose inhabitants were converted into stone. You walk through fine streets, and noble palaces meet your eye at every turn, but life and activity are gone.

“ Ferrara, in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
There seems as ’t were a curse upon the seats
Of former sovereigns.”

Yet there is a charm in this melancholy spot to all lovers of poetry, and if nothing else brought pilgrim-feet to its desert city, many would visit Ferrara as the scene of Ariosto’s early days and of Tasso’s sufferings.

The personal history of Ariosto, unlike that of Tasso, presents little to fix the attention even of his greatest admirers. He was born at Reggio in 1474, and was intended by his father for the profession of the law ; but his natural inclination for the pursuit in which he was destined to shine was irrepressible, and after five years spent in vainly attempting to fix his mind on the study

of law, the young Ludovico was wisely allowed by his father to pursue his natural bent, and devote himself to literature. With the sanction of his parent he went to Rome, and there imbibed fresh ardour in his favourite pursuit. In 1500 he returned to Ferrara, and attached himself to Cardinal Ippolito of Este, the second son of Ercole the First, with whom he travelled through various parts of Europe. It was during this period that he began the poem upon which his fame principally rests. Pursuing the idea already adopted by Bojardo in the "*Orlando Innamorato*," Ariosto composed the "*Orlando Furioso*," a poem which, for graceful and fanciful imagination, is by many deemed without a rival. It is indeed a dream of fancy; he carries the mind into a world of poetry and illusion; his heroes are superhuman, his heroines angelic; and he employs so skilfully the powers of enchantment, that magic seems to become nature under his pen. The age of chivalry is the period he has chosen for his poem, and he revels in all the romance with which it teems; brilliant gems of poetical description are scattered here and there, but while the fancy is gratified the heart remains untouched. While the "*Orlando Furioso*" was received with enthusiasm throughout Italy, the patron of Ariosto seemed alone insensible to its merits; disgusted by his

apathy, the poet quitted Ippolito, and was invited by Alfonso the First to his court at Ferrara. There he continued to reside, the Duke having entrusted him with the direction of the theatre. His income seems at all times to have been limited ; but whilst under the patronage of Alfonso he was enabled to build himself a house, over which he placed the following inscription :—

“ Parva sed apta mihi ; sed nulli obnoxia, sed non
Sordida, parta meo sed tamen ære domus *.”

What was the name of the lady of his love, who he married, or who was the mother of his children, are not known ; indeed, all the events of his history are involved in such doubt and uncertainty, that they afford but scanty and unsatisfactory materials to his biographers.

* “ ’Tis small, but fit for me ; gives none offence ;
Not mean, yet builded at my own expense.”

LETTER XIII.

Ferrara, May 29th.

THE Biblioteca in this city contains a large collection of valuable treasures : amongst these we saw a copy of the first edition of “ Orlando Furioso,” four of which only are extant ; many of the manuscripts of Ariosto, the inkstand which he used when writing his great poem, and the arm-chair in which he used to sit. The tomb of Ariosto is also in this library ; his remains, originally buried in the church of the Benedictines, were subsequently removed to this spot, and on the monument is inscribed a Latin epitaph by Guarini.

Here too are preserved a manuscript copy of Guarini’s beautiful poem, “ Il Pastor Fido,” and a still more precious one of the “ Gerusalemme Liberata,” transcribed by a friend of Tasso, and containing the corrections which the miserable poet made during his confinement in the Asylum of St. Anne, with a poetical petition to Alfonso d’ Este, praying for release from his imprisonment.

It is impossible to visit Ferrara without a feeling of deep and painful interest in the fate of Torquato Tasso. Every one goes to see the cell in which he was immured ; we have just returned from it, and I would dwell for a few moments on the history of this great and ill-fated poet.

Torquato Tasso was born at Sorrento in 1544 ; his father Bernardo, a poet of considerable celebrity, seems to have fostered in the mind of his son sentiments of piety and a deep poetical feeling. In his childhood he betrayed many peculiarities, "was grave, dignified and wise, and appeared marked out for the accomplishment of some great design." His faculties were early developed, and while still a child he gave signs of that physical irritability which often accompanies a precocious intellect. At the age of sixteen Tasso went to the University of Padua to study law, and while there he composed his first poem, "Rinaldo."

When Tasso first visited Ferrara, that city was celebrated for its magnificence and gaiety—

"The pleasant place of all festivity."

"The court united, like the poem of Tasso, classic elegance with the richness of romance, and everything conspired to kindle the fancy and refine the taste of this youthful bard*."

* Black's Life of Tasso.

The ancient family of Este had long reigned as dukes of Ferrara, and being themselves distinguished for talent, they delighted in assembling around them scholars, poets, and men celebrated in all branches of literature. At the period when our youthful poet was first introduced to this court, Alfonso the Second was the reigning prince—a man who is spoken of as brave and liberal, and the zealous patron of the fine arts ; but proud and capricious, tenacious of offence, and unforgiving in spirit. The young Tasso was well received in this brilliant court ; his poem of Rinaldo had ensured him a welcome there, and he found in the princesses Lucretia and Leonora, sisters of Alfonso, kind and intelligent patrons and friends.

We cannot wonder that, dazzled by the beauty and charmed by the graceful manners of the younger sister, Leonora, Tasso became a ready admirer of this lovely and accomplished lady. He read to her the cantos of his “*Gerusalemme Liberata*,” on which he was then engaged, and listened eagerly to the praises she bestowed on his poem. This is not the place to enter on the question (even were I so inclined) of the effect which Torquato’s affection for Leonora d’ Este had in producing his insanity ; it seems that, possessing the ardent imagination and irritable temperament of a poet, many feelings combined to

foster the incipient disease. Jealous of his fame as an author, every breath of blame, every censure on his poem fed the flame within him ; the aspersions and calumnies which envy and jealousy of his success drew down upon him, were constant sources of vexation and misery to his sensitive nature. But during the first attacks which were made on him, he found a solace in the kindness of Alfonso ; who, interested in the work which the grateful Tasso had dedicated to him, listened with delight to the poet as he recited his verses, and gave him every encouragement.

In 1575 we perceive that a change has come over the pleasant friendship which thus existed between prince and poet, and the causes of it may be briefly stated. There was at this time a deadly feud between the houses of Medici and Este ; the former had given some cause of offence to Alfonso, whose implacable disposition rendered all attempts at reconciliation hopeless ; and when, at the invitation of the Cardinal de' Medici, Tasso was induced to quit Ferrara and repair to Rome, the Duke's jealousy was aroused. Naturally desirous of attaching such a poet to his court, he was indignant that Tasso should listen to the offers of his rivals, even though they were refused ; Torquato soon afterwards returned to Ferrara, but the sting had been planted ; and although he was

received apparently with open arms, yet Alfonso was thenceforward more alive to the calumnies of his malicious enemies, amongst whom was Montecatino, the duke's secretary.

Disappointment from various sources now awaited Torquato, and his mind, exhausted by long and earnest study, could but ill resist its influence. A surreptitious edition of his poem had been printed and circulated through Italy. The famous Accademia della Crusca in Florence was sending forth its strictures on the *Gerusalemme*; it was pronounced by this learned assembly of critics to be full of barbarisms and discordant facts; it declared that Tasso's eloquence had no power to stir the feelings, that his descriptions of character and passion were feeble, and comparing his poem with that of Pulci (an author less read at the present day), affirmed that the *Gerusalemme* was to the *Morgante Maggiore* like a skeleton beside a living form. Every hour of his life was embittered by these attacks; he imagined injuries even where they did not exist, and thought all men were his enemies. At length, in a transport of rage, he attempted to strike a servant of the Duchess of Urbino with a knife in her presence, and was in consequence confined by the Duke's order to some apartments in the palace.

He was soon released, and for a time was better;

but his malady returning with increased violence, he fled from Ferrara, and, after enduring the most terrible hardships, made his way to Sorrento, a spot in which he had spent his childhood, and where his sister Cornelia, now a widow, dwelt. The following extract, describing his arrival at her house, is given in Black's Life of Tasso*.

“ Having entered into the city, and into the

* For the following succinct account of the origin of this celebrated Academy, I am indebted to the kindness of a friend.

The Accademia Platonica, founded in Florence about the middle of the fifteenth century, by Cosmo de' Medici, was the first institution established in Europe with a view to raise the philosophy of Plato, and to supersede the scholastic dogmas then universally in vogue. It flourished greatly under the auspices of his grandson Lorenzo, but was supplanted about a century after its birth by another society called the “ Sacra Accademia Fiorentina,” instituted in 1542 by Cosmo I. The attention of this Academy was wasted on the most fanciful comments on the earlier Italian poets ; and on the death of that gloomy tyrant, five of the Academicians, joined by the famous Leonardo Salviati, seceded, and formed another society, which professed to cultivate the Italian language, by winnowing the flour (*il fiore*) from the bran (*la crusca*) ; they chose for their device a boulting-mill, and the motto “ Il più bel fior ne coglie,” and assumed the title of Accademia della Crusca, the members taking the appropriate names of *Infarinato*, *Rimenato*, *Gramolato*, *Insaccato*, etc. Unfortunately, the first undertaking of this Academy was the disgraceful war it carried on against Tasso, but it afterwards acquired some claims to the gratitude of Italy by the compilation of a great Dictionary of the Italian language, of which several enlarged editions have been made under its care.

house of his sister, he found her alone with her servants ; for she was now a widow, and her two sons were at that time not in the house. Being introduced, he feigned himself a messenger, and delivered her some letters, which he said were from her brother. These expressed that Torquato was in the most imminent risk of his life, unless she succoured him with sisterly love, by procuring him some letters of protection of which he had need, and he referred her to the messenger for particulars. Terrified and afflicted with this sad intelligence, she desired, as soon as she was somewhat recovered, to hear the detail. Torquato exaggerated his fabled danger, and recounted a very probable story in language so pathetic, that his sister fainted with excess of grief. Being now certain of her love, and accusing himself for causing her to suffer so much anguish, he began first to comfort her, and at last discovered himself ; by degrees, however, and in such a manner as not to expose her to a new relapse."

He remained at Sorrento for some time, solaced and tranquillized by the affectionate solicitude of his sister ; but his restless temper after a time led him back to Ferrara. There he was treated as an insane person, the Duke and Princesses avoiding rather than seeking his society. He then wandered, disgusted and dissatisfied, from court to

court, and visited Padua and Venice, where, he says, he found all hearts equally hardened ; at length he repaired again to Ferrara, just at the time of the Duke's third marriage. Neglected in the bustle of the moment, Tasso became infuriated, and burst forth in public into loud and bitter invectives against the Duke, who ordered him to be confined in St. Anne's Hospital. Nor, had this confinement (necessary perhaps at the moment) been all, should we have much right to brand Alfonso's name with cruelty ; but the treatment which the poet afterwards received, his rigorous imprisonment in a dungeon, and the neglect he endured from his former patrons, was a needless and inhuman aggravation of his misery, and speedily completed the distraction of his brain.

Many of the poems and letters written during his confinement contain the most pathetic appeals to the mercy of Alfonso and Leonora ; in one he says, "*Sovrattutto mi affligge la solitudine, mia crudele e natural nemica* *." In a sonnet addressed to a friend we find this passage :

" Io pur languisco a morte
In carcer tetro e sotto aspro governo †."

* "Above all, solitude afflicts me, my cruel and natural enemy."

† "Yet do I pine to death in prison dark and under a severe control."

In another sonnet he gives a mournful picture of his blighted hopes and captivity :

“ Suonan i gran palaggi e i tetti adorni
 Di canto ; io sol di pianto il carcer tetro
 Fo risonar. Questa è la data fede ?
 Son questi i miei bramati alti ritorni ?
 Lasso ! dunque prigion, dunque feretro
 Chiamate voi pietà, Donna, e mercede * ? ”

Soon after he entered St. Anne's, Leonora died, and while her praises were sung by many courtly poets, Tasso offered no tribute to her memory : his gift it was to weave her name imperishably in the wreath which surrounds his brow ; for, allowing all the effect which disappointed ambition, wounded self-love, and other irritating causes might have had in overthrowing Tasso's reason, we cannot deny that love had its share in producing the fatal event. He loved above him, he loved hopelessly, and to his excitable temperament and sensitive heart such trials must have had a double sting.

But I hasten to conclude this sketch of Tasso's life. After an imprisonment of seven years, the severity of which was somewhat mitigated during

* “ The spacious palaces and fretted roofs
 Resound with song. I my lone darksome cell
 Make echo with laments. Is this their faith ?
 Is this my earnestly desired return ?
 Alas ! then, lady, is this sepulchre,
 This prison, call'd by you reward and love ? ”

the latter part, he was released, at the earnest intercession of some of the Duke's friends. He then continued to drag on a miserable existence ; but at length he found favour in the sight of Pope Gregory the Fourteenth, who promised him a coronation at the Capitol in the following April. Disappointment, however, followed him to the last hour of his life : on the eve of the day appointed for the ceremony, Tasso breathed his last in the monastery of Sant' Onofrio, on the Janiculum, at Rome,—“a spot,” he says in a letter, “to which I have caused myself to be conducted, that I may begin at this exalted place, and with the intercourse of these devout fathers, my conversation in Heaven : pray to God for me* !”

Mestre, May 30th.

WE quitted Ferrara yesterday, slept at Monselice, and have tonight reached this village, within sight of Venice. Our road lay over the low marshy country which extends from Bologna to Venice, and was bordered by poplars—avenues of these tall formal trees extending for miles in a straight line.

Soon after quitting Ferrara, we crossed the Po

* Tasso's residence at the court of Ferrara is the subject of one of Goethe's most beautiful poems,—marked by a fine delineation of character, and a rich and highly polished versification. Byron's exquisite poem, “The Lament of Tasso,” is well known.

on a *pont volant*. The bed of this river, here a wide and rapid stream, is so much raised by the quantity of stones and gravel which the torrent brings down from the mountains, and which accumulate in this level plain, that it is already elevated considerably above the adjacent country; high embankments are raised to prevent an inundation; should these at any time prove an ineffectual barrier to the spring floods, terrible will be the devastation.

We stopped to dine at Rovigo, and shortly after passed the Adige on another *pont volant*. Our drive this morning has been delightful, following for a long time the course of a canal, which leads to Venice, fringed with Palladian villas. Amongst the beautiful Euganean hills on our left lay Arquà, the mountain-village which contains the house and tomb of Petrarca. This spot had great attractions for us, but we resisted them: our time being limited, we preferred giving the day before us to Padua, which we should otherwise have been obliged to leave unseen. We reached this curious old town by ten o'clock, and have spent the morning in visiting its churches and palaces.

The origin of Padua, according to tradition, dates from the fall of Troy*, having been founded

* See the *Æneid*, book i. verse 332.

by Antenor the companion of Æneas. A simple massive stone monument, which stands in the open air before the church of San' Lorenzo, is erroneously said to be the tomb of the Trojan. Fiercely attacked by the Goths and Huns under Alaric and Attila, its inhabitants sought an asylum amongst the low marshy islands of the Adriatic. Padua, although destroyed and burnt to the ground, rose again under the dominion of the Lombards, and in the eleventh century we find it a republic, governed by its own laws and magistrates. The city fell under the tyranny of the cruel and fierce Eccelino da Romano, in 1278, who oppressed the people with taxes, which he exacted with every species of torture: eleven thousand Paduans perished on the scaffold, or expired miserably in prison. At length a conspiracy against Eccelino was formed by the Lombard nobles: the tyrant was dethroned, and Padua regained its liberty.

The city was subsequently under the government of the Carrara family, amongst whom we may particularly distinguish Francesco, the friend of Petrarcha, a generous and urbane prince, the patron of learning and the arts. Having drawn on himself the suspicion of the Venetian Senate, and being attacked by Giovanni Visconti, lord of Milan, he was unable to maintain his power; and falling into the hands of his enemies, he was dragged from

dungeon to dungeon, until he was at length released by death.

The adventures of his son Francesco Novello are deserving of a brief notice. He continued the war against the Visconti and the family of La Scala of Verona, possessed himself of the latter city and laid siege to Vicenza. This alarmed the Venetians, who declared war on Francesco, and besieged Padua. Surrounded by difficulties, pestilence spreading within his city and war at its very gates, Francesco offered to yield to the Venetians: the terms which they proposed were, however, so ignominious, that the brave lord of Padua indignantly rejected them. A fresh attack was made on the assailants, and they were compelled to retire. But treason at length effected what valour had failed to accomplish; the gate of the city was opened to the Venetians by stealth, and Francesco, imprudently trusting to the honour of his conquerors, presented himself before Galeazzo di Mantova, their general: he was loaded with chains and carried prisoner to Venice. When the Grand Council were deliberating on his fate, Galeazzo rose, and, remonstrating with the senators on their treacherous conduct, nobly defended his enemy's cause. The proud nobles were ill-used to brook words of reproach, and Galeazzo paid the forfeit of his boldness, being found dead

a few days afterwards : Francesco was strangled in prison. Thus ended the reign of the Carrara family in Padua, which had lasted eighty-eight years.

This city was foremost in the opposition made by the League of Cambray to the increasing power of Venice. Of this I shall tell you more hereafter, and will only observe here, that the struggles of this small republic to retain its liberty were ineffectual, and it remained ever after tributary to its proud and jealous neighbour.

But Padua has other and higher claims on our grateful attention—

“ Fair Padua, nursery of arts,”

whose University, founded in the eleventh century, obtained for it celebrity when literature was first emerging from the darkness of the Middle Ages. Shakspeare, you remember, in the “Taming of the Shrew,” makes a comparison between this university and that of Pisa :

“ Here let us breathe, and happily institute
A course of learning and ingenious studies ;
* * * for I have Pisa left
And am to Padua come, as he that leaves
A shallow plash, to plunge him in the deep,
And with satiety to quench his thirst.”

For many years Padua maintained its rank as the chief seat of learning in Europe ; it numbered

fifteen hundred students*, in the list of whom we find many illustrious names. In this University Tasso studied law, and Christopher Columbus received that knowledge of mathematics and astronomy which enabled him afterwards to steer fearlessly over the deep, and led him to the discovery of a new hemisphere. Here Galileo was a professor; and in the fifteenth century we find enrolled in this college the name of Cassandra Fedele, who, having gone through the usual course of studies, graduated, and delivered Latin lectures in the University; Poliziano speaks of her as the honour of her sex and of Italy.

At Padua, likewise, Petrarca resided when he was far advanced in years—an old and venerable student. This brings to mind a circumstance which some historians have connected with this seat of learning, and to which I would fain give credence: it is at all events one, if true, of so interesting a nature that I willingly pause to relate it here. I have spoken to you frequently of Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio as the creators of the Italian language, and I seize an occasion to connect

* Eustace says eighteen thousand, which must be erroneous. Dr. Moore says that the School of Anatomy alone contained five or six hundred students.

with their names that of their great contemporary, Geoffrey Chaucer, "the father of English poetry."

Chaucer was held in high estimation, not only as a poet, but a statesman: he was the friend of kings and nobles, and in 1373 was sent by Edward the Third as an ambassador to Genoa. It is believed, with some apparent probability*, that he afterwards made a tour through the north of Italy, and visited amongst other places Padua, where Petrarca then resided. Chaucer was familiar with the writings of Boccaccio and Petrarca, and has borrowed largely from the former: he went to Italy full of admiration for their genius, with all the glowing sympathy of a brother-poet, and we may readily imagine the delight with which he would have hailed an occasion, if such presented itself, of seeing and conversing with Petrarca. Their meeting, if it really took place, must have been one of no common interest to these two great poets, and I cannot resist extracting the account of it given by Chaucer's biographer, Mr. Godwin.

"Petrarca was at this time nearly seventy years of age, and he survived only by twelve months the visit of the English poet. It must have been a striking object to Chaucer to behold

* There is no direct historical proof of the circumstance; Chaucer himself has left no mention of it, except (as is believed) an allusion to which I shall presently refer.

this grey-headed yet impassioned poet, in a period when the gift of poetry was so exceedingly rare ; this correspondent of popes, of states, and of emperors ; this poet who had been crowned by Paris and Rome ; and from whose compositions Chaucer's infant lips had perhaps first drunk in the numerousness of verse. Petrarca was interesting to Chaucer, because Chaucer saw in him, as it were, the lineal descendant of the Ciceros, the Virgils, and the Ovids of Italy in its days of classical greatness. Chaucer was interesting to Petrarca for a different reason. He came from the *ultima Thule* ; to later times the literature and poetical genius of Britain are familiar ; * * * but this was a spectacle altogether unknown to the times of Petrarca. He interrogated his guest ; he proposed to him his most trying and difficult criterions ; he exchanged with him the glances of mind and the flashes of a poet's eye. Chaucer had already written his *Troilus* and *Creseide*, and many of his most meritorious productions ; he was more than forty years of age ; we may imagine how he answered the ordeal of the Italian, and stood up to him with the sober and manly consciousness of a poet to poet. Petrarca hesitated, suspected, and at length became wholly a convert ; he embraced the wondrous stranger from a frozen clime, and foresaw, with that inspiration which attends the closing period of departing genius, the future glories of a Spenser, a Shakespear and a Milton. * * * * Petrarca had just finished his version of the tale of *Grisildis* ; he read this to Chaucer ; Chaucer was entranced ; the magic of the tale, perhaps the most pathetic that human fancy ever conceived, heard under the sacred roof of him in whom the genius of modern poetry seemed to be concentrated, and from the aged lips of him to whom that roof was indebted for its sacredness, was altogether a surprize, a feast, a complication of sentiment and of pleasure, such as it has fallen to the lot of few mortals to partake. Having heard the tale, Chaucer requested of Petrarca permission to take a copy of it. So

much is implied when he makes the Clerk of Oxenford say that he

‘Lern’d it at Padowé of a worthy clerk,
Fraunceis Petrark.’”

Whether or no this interview ever really took place, we may at least dwell upon the picture with pleasure and profit, as presenting the characters of two of the greatest poets of the period ; so much at least is truth, and such, we may feel assured, would have been the meeting, and such their mutual feelings on the occasion. There seems to be a probability attached to the story, and, without accepting it as strict historical truth, we recur to it with a hope that it may not be wholly fabulous*.

But I have wandered far from Padua. In passing the University, we peeped into its fine old court : there is an air of venerable and simple grandeur about the whole building which fills one with admiration ; its architecture is Doric, and the fa-

* I will only add, that the presumptive evidence of the circumstance rests chiefly on the words which Chaucer has put into the mouth of the Clerk of Oxenford, in the *Canterbury Tales*, who, there is reason to believe, the poet meant to represent himself. The beautiful story of the Fair Griselda, which Chaucer has introduced into his *Canterbury Tales*, was originally written by Boccaccio, in his *Decamerone*, and translated into Latin by Petrarca the year before Chaucer is supposed to have visited him at Padua.

gade is supported on four beautiful pillars ; Palladio was the architect.

One of the first places we visited in Padua was the Salone di Ragione, or ancient Hall of Justice. It is of immense length and height, resting alone upon the four walls which surround it, and like Westminster Hall, unsupported by any pillars. The walls contain frescos by Giotto, and the tomb of Titus Livius, who was a native of Padua. A wide balcony runs along the front of the building, and from this we looked down on the Piazza delle Erbe, where a market is held. It was a busy and curious scene ; stalls of different wares were surrounded by buyers and sellers—earthenware, haberdashery, vegetables, fruit, and every kind of useful or ornamental article, mixed with eatables—the crowds of people in costume, eagerly making their bargains and gesticulating with true Italian vehemence. Amongst the sellers I saw a boy with a handful of wooden crucifixes ; holding one up to view as a specimen, he proclaimed with a loud voice the merits of his goods.

Padua, like Bologna, abounds in arcades, which give a peculiar character to the city, and leave little passage-room for carriages. Oxen are more frequently used for draught than horses, and four or six are often yoked to one cart.

In the Cathedral we saw a simple monument to

the memory of Petrarca, who was a canon of this church, and in the sacristy hangs his portrait. Here also are shown two very ancient illuminated manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; the colours are brilliant, and the faces finished with the accuracy of a miniature, but the devices and imaginations of the painter quaint and droll beyond description. One is the Epistles, the other the Gospels; in the former, which is dated A.D. 1259, the back-grounds are of gold, from which the figures stand in fine relief: the Gospels bear the date A.D. 1170.

We next visited the Palazzo Papafava, to see a singular piece of sculpture, by Fasolato, consisting of a group of sixty small figures, each perfect in itself, yet all united at some one point. This curious work, cut out of a single block of marble, represents Gabriel chasing the rebel Angels from Heaven; the centre stem, on which all the figures seem to depend, is the Hydra: every angel is in a different attitude, and some are very fine; in parts the limbs are so interlaced that the eye can with difficulty follow the design. Canova, when he saw this group, said that the sculptor could never have accomplished such a work without the aid of the devil himself.

The churches of Sant' Antonio and Santa Gius-

tina next attracted us. The former is the patron saint of Padua, and the town is full of shrines to his honour, adorned with lamps and votive offerings. He has his peculiar church, and in it a chapel, the walls of which are lined with the offerings of devotees. This church is one of the most singular we have seen : it contains many works of art which are much valued—frescos by Giotto, ancient bassi-relievi in bronze, and one of Donatello's crucifixes ; while, mingling with these treasures, are tawdry gilding, badly executed paintings and images of saints or the Virgin and our Saviour, in the worst possible taste. The roof of the aisles springs into semi-gothic arches, and in some of the large pillars are niched small altars, while others are surrounded by curious old tombs.

In strong contrast to this rich and magnificent temple, is the church of Santa Giustina, which is more striking, from the grand simplicity of its architecture, its open spacious aisles and dome, than Sant' Antonio with all its splendour. In approaching this church, we passed through a fine piazza called the Prato della Valle, planted with beautiful trees—catalpas, tulip-trees and many others of rare growth—and surrounded by statues of celebrated Paduans, two of which are by Canova. The whole is encircled by a stream of limpid water,

crossed by several bridges, and within this enclosure are promenades and seats.

On the walls of the Chapel of the Annunziata dell' Arena is a series of fresco paintings by Giotto, of the highest interest, representing the lives of Christ, the Virgin and St. Joseph.

Before quitting Padua, I must not omit to notice the School of Painting, which flourished here in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Its founder was Francesco Squarcione, who travelled in Italy and Greece, collecting remains of ancient art. On his return to Padua, these treasures attracted artists from various parts of Italy ; and thus the study of design, which is the chief feature of the Paduan school, was spread and cultivated.

The most celebrated of Squarcione's scholars was Andrea da Mantegna, who was born at Padua in 1431. His first works are distinguished by great correctness of outline and beauty of form, which he had acquired from the study of the antique under Squarcione. His attention at first was so fixed upon this manner, to the neglect of expression, that there was danger of his style degenerating into stiffness and formality. He was saved from this error by the remonstrance of his master, and Lanzi says that in his later paintings "there breathes that spirit which animates dead images, and which we term expres-

sion*.” In speaking of his picture of St. Mark, this writer adds, “the countenance expresses the thoughtfulness of a philosopher and the inspiration of a prophet.”

Mantegna, although a Paduan by birth, spent little of his time in his native city; having been invited by Ludovico Gonzaga, lord of Mantua, he resided and painted most of his works there. The principal works of Mantegna in Padua are in the Church of Gli Eremitani; they are historical subjects, and the paintings are in fresco.

I have mentioned this school chiefly from the influence it had on the others of Italy: excepting Mantegna, it produced no artists whom I need notice here; but those of Ferrara and Venice were greatly aided in the study of design by the labours of Squarcione, and by his valuable collection of antiques.

We quitted Padua with regret, and, after a pleasant journey of about three or four hours, arrived at the dirty little village from which I write. Our road followed the course of the Brenta for some way; the villas on its banks are very foreign-looking; statues are seen at each gate, and the long parapets of the houses are often lined with them, while avenues of the stately cypress lead from

* “Che anima le morte immagini, e cui diciamo espressione.”

the water's edge to the entrance-door. The rain, which we had long expected, began to fall heavily before we reached Mestre ; but we could discern, between the showers and the mistiness accompanying them, the towers of Venice. With what joy did I recognize them springing from the wide sheet of waters—the beautiful city of the sea ! And here we spend the night, which would seem endless, with Venice before me, but that I have beguiled some hours by writing to you.

LETTER XIV.

Venice, May 31st.

WE are just arrived, and, while waiting for our dinner, let me spend a few minutes in beginning a letter to you; I will finish it this evening, for rain is coming, and threatens to keep us prisoners to the house. I have drawn a little table to the window, which looks upon the Grand Canal, and can scarcely take my eyes from the novel and busy scene below. Gondolas are flitting by with the swiftness of an arrow, some bearing passengers, some merchandize, and many filled with gaily-dressed people. I try in vain to keep my eye fixed on my paper, and to resist all temptation to idleness from without; the peculiar and shrill cry of the gondoliers, as they pass each other, or the splashing of their oars, arrests my attention, and I cannot forget for an instant that I am in Venice.

We have been here about two hours, and have already seen the Piazza of St. Mark's, have stood

before its famous Basilica, and wandered into the court of the Ducal Palace. Venice, with her canals and bridges, palaces and churches, has so long been rendered familiar to me by the inimitable paintings of Canaletti and Prout's beautiful sketches, that I can hardly yet persuade myself that what I see is really Venice—it is as if I still gazed on pictures.

The associations connected with this city scarcely yield in interest to those which Rome possesses. In following the history of this wonderful republic, tales of romance and deep pathos are continually presented: how, in the dark and secret policy of her government, does the human mind, ever prone to the mysterious, find food for wonder and for thought! and while we must lament the monopoly and abuse of power exhibited in this singular page of history, we yet contemplate the ancient republic in her “high and palmy days,” with amazement and feelings allied to admiration.

“A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate, throned on her hundred isles.”

Poetry unites with history and romance to heighten the charm which surrounds Venice:

“ For us she has a spell beyond
Her name in story.”

Who can behold the Rialto, or wander through the streets of Venice, made classical by the names of Shylock and Othello, of Portia and Desdemona, without a thrill of pleasure? Here the Italian scenes and characters described by Shakspeare rise in vivid reality before us; and my heart glows as I tread the ground which the muse of our immortal bard has hallowed.

“ Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor
And Pierre shall not be swept or worn away—
The keystones of the arch! Though all were o’er,
For us repeopled is this solitary shore *!”

Sismondi calls Venice “a republic without liberty,” and, anomalous as it may appear, so in truth it was; freedom was a word unknown in the vocabulary of its rulers. Despotism and tyranny of the worst kind brooded over the city, while terror and mystery, treachery and espionage, were the agents employed by its government. Blind and implicit obedience to arbitrary laws, passive submission even to the most cruel injustice, were exacted; and such was the infatuated reverence and passionate attachment of the people to the republic of St. Mark, that they never questioned

* Childe Harold.

the justice of its decrees, but bent their servile necks to the yoke which it imposed.

Let us, for a few minutes, retrace her history, and see this queen of cities, this “sea Cybele,” in her infant days, when, chased from the continent of Italy by the powerful Alaric and the fierce Attila, a handful of fugitives sought refuge from the invaders amongst the marshy islands in the Lagune*.

These islands, situated at the extremity of the Adriatic, were formed by the deposit of many large rivers, which empty themselves in this vicinity; and here, in sorrow and exile, did these unhappy people lay the foundations of a republic, before which the powers of Europe and of Asia were to bow, and whose existence was destined to extend through thirteen centuries. They strengthened the muddy and unstable foundations of their asylum with piles and ramparts, and in the year 421 began their city on the Rivo Alto†, the principal of these islands; where, safe from the pursuit of their enemies and the disasters which were sweeping across Italy, they flourished and increased in importance.

* The Lagune is that shallow part of the sea which lies between the main-land and the chain of long low islands which divide it from the open Adriatic. It is in this land-locked sea that the islands are situated on which Venice is built.

† *Rivo alto* signifies ‘deep stream’; the Rialto, a contraction of this, was the name given first to the island, and afterwards to the bridge which connected it with the other land.

Fresh emigrants from the desolated provinces arrived, and they gained a scanty maintenance by fishing and the manufacture of salt. In 697 we find this colony governed by a chief magistrate, or Doge, whose office was held for life. Whilst the imperial power of Rome was gradually dwindling to a mere shadow, and Papal dominion was slowly supplanting it, Venice attached herself to the Eastern empire, and could never be brought to acknowledge Charlemagne or his successors as the lawful emperors of the West.

Venice lent a powerful aid in the equipment of the fleet for the Crusades ; she is said to have furnished two hundred vessels to the first expedition, in 1099 ; and after this period we see her rising in commercial power, and maintaining her rank beside Amalfi, Genoa, and Pisa—places at that time of great wealth and influence.

When, on the death of Pope Adrian the Fourth, in 1159, a quarrel arose in the Consistory of Cardinals, two Popes were elected. The one, Victor the Fourth, found an able supporter in Frederic Barbarossa, emperor of Germany ; while Alexander the Third, although obliged to fly from Rome, and wander from place to place, a fugitive and outcast, remained firm to his purpose of securing the tiara, and humbling his imperial antagonist.

Pursued by the relentless hate of Frederic, he took refuge in Venice, which had previously declared against the emperor, and arriving in that city late in the evening, uncertain of the reception he should meet with from the Senate, he is said to have passed the night in the porch of a convent. The following inscription remains to this day on the door of San' Salvatore :

“ALEXANDRO III. PONT. MAX. PERNOCTANTI.”

The conduct of Ziani, at that time the reigning Doge, was truly noble ; he welcomed Alexander with kindness and the respect due to his high rank, and when summoned by Frederic, “the Roman emperor,” to deliver him up in chains on pain of war being proclaimed against Venice, Ziani, in spite of the emperor's threat, that “he would press them by sea and land, and never stop until he had planted his victorious eagles on St. Mark's,” refused compliance.

Warlike preparations were made, which ended in the complete discomfiture of Frederic. On the return of the Doge and his victorious fleet, Alexander met him ; and joyfully embracing his deliverer, presented him with a ring, uttering these famous words, “Take this ring, and with it take, on my authority, the sea as your subject. Every year, on the return of this happy day, you and

your successors shall make known to all posterity that the right of conquest has subjugated the Adriatic to Venice, as a spouse to her husband ! ” This speech was the origin of the annual ceremony performed at Venice, when the Doge, surrounded by the most powerful nobles and fairest ladies in the land, sailed in the Bucentaur, his state galley, to the open Adriatic, where with great solemnity and pomp, casting the ring into the waters, he proclaimed the sea his bride, saying, “ We wed thee with this ring, in token of our true and perpetual sovereignty.”

A still further calamity awaited Frederic ; his troops were defeated by the Milanese, and being pressed on all sides, he gladly yielded the point of the election of the pontiff, and Alexander was declared Pope. Frederic, eager to testify his approbation and consent to his elevation, proposed to visit Venice and claim absolution from the Holy Father. He was conducted to St. Mark’s by the Doge and his retinue, and there in the porch stood the triumphant Alexander. Calmly and sternly he watched the approach of his former foe ; and when the emperor bowed in humility before the pontiff, the temptation to crush him was too strong for his proud spirit : setting his foot on the neck of the prostrate Frederic, he exclaimed, “ Thou shalt go upon the lion and the adder ; the

young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet." Writhing under this humiliation, the emperor ejaculated, "Not to thee, but to Peter!" when again planting his foot violently on Frederic's neck, the Pope cried out, "Both to *me* and to Peter!" Thus was imperial dignity humbled before papal pride.

The Crusade formed under Fulk de Neuilly in 1198, was aided by the Venetian fleet, of which their brave Doge the octogenarian Enrico Dandolo assumed the command. After the capture of several towns, Constantinople was taken, in 1204; and to the valour of the blind old Doge was this success mainly attributable. The metropolis of the East was abandoned to the plunder of the Crusaders, who, not content with carrying away rich treasures of gold and silver from the palaces and churches, in their blind fury and ignorance wantonly destroyed the noble works of art contained within the city; and thus manuscripts of inestimable value, the accumulation of ages, perished. The beautiful bronze horses, which still adorn the front of St. Mark's church, were part of the rich booty which Dandolo caused to be transported to Venice. The Crusaders shared amongst them the territories they had conquered: Candia, and some other islands of the Archipelago, Achaia,

with the Morea, and many sea-ports, fell to the portion of Venice.

I cannot follow the vicissitudes of fortune that attended the wars in which Venice engaged with Genoa, her rival in commercial power and opulence. The names and exploits of their respective generals, Niccolo Pisani on the side of the Venetians, and Paganino Doria on that of the Genoese, are illustrious in the annals of history.

It may be well here to remark, that in the course of the time which had elapsed since its foundation, the form of government in Venice had undergone a gradual change. The mixed democracy and oligarchy, which existed previously, had given place to a decided and vigorous aristocracy. Yielding in appearance an almost servile submission to the laws of their country, the Venetian nobles had slowly and secretly usurped the supreme power. The government consisted of a Grand Council, composed of four hundred and eighty members, chosen annually by electors appointed by the people. The Doge, originally elected in the same manner, came at length to be appointed by this Council, and was little more than a puppet in their hands. In 1289 an effort was made by the people to regain their privileges, which, failing, served but to strengthen their

bonds ; and the fearful aristocracy was founded in 1297, which Sismondi thus eloquently describes : “That aristocracy, so prudent, so jealous, so ambitious, which Europe regarded with astonishment ; immoveable in principle, unshaken in power ; uniting some of the most odious practices of despotism with the name of liberty ; suspicious and perfidious in politics ; sanguinary in revenge ; indulgent to the subject, sumptuous in the public service, œconomical in the administration of the finances ; equitable and impartial in that of justice ; knowing well how to give prosperity to the arts, to agriculture, and to commerce ; beloved by the people who obeyed it, whilst it made the nobles who partook of its power tremble.” To the Grand Council was added a Council of Ten, who were superior to all law, and whose office it was especially to watch over the safety of the Republic, and punish all treason against the state.

From the many painful instances in the Venetian history of the arbitrary and sanguinary character of the government, I will select one or two of the most striking. Byron’s beautiful tragedy of ‘Marino Faliero,’ which we read together last year, has made you acquainted with his tragical story ; and in the fate of Francesco Carmagnola we find another strong proof of the base ingratitude and treachery of the Venetian Senate. In order to

make it intelligible, I must tell you of Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan, under whom he had served faithfully as general for many years ; until Visconti, jealous of his power over the troops, dismissed him from his court in disgrace. Carmagnola, stung to the quick by this injustice, presented himself to the Venetians, and, by revealing the ambitious views which Visconti entertained respecting Venice, incited them to join the league of princes then formed in Italy against the Duke of Milan. He was appointed by them generalissimo of the armies, and for many years fortune favoured all his enterprizes, and Venice acquired fresh glory and new dominions. In 1431 he was surprised and overpowered by the enemy, when the Senate, who, treacherous themselves, always distrusted the fidelity of their servants, instantly imputed treasonable motives to Carmagnola. He was perfidiously invited to Venice, and received there with honour ; senators went out to meet him, and he was conducted with pomp to the presence of the Doge. In an eloquent speech he related the circumstances which had led to his defeat ; his words were applauded ; but scarcely had he resumed his seat, than he was seized and conducted to prison, and, after many secret examinations before the Council, and the cruel mockery of a trial before judges predetermined to condemn him,

he was led forth to death, and perished on the scaffold in the Piazza of St. Mark : the populace, amazed and terrified by the sudden fall of so great a man, and awed by the mystery attending his fate, dared not to question the justice of his sentence*.

Francesco Foscari, the Doge who presided at this tragedy, was doomed to experience in his old-age, after a reign of thirty-four years, the severity and cruelty of the Venetian policy in its fullest extent. His son Giacopo, denounced by secret spies to the Council of Ten, was arrested, and subjected, in the presence of his aged parent, to the horrors of the rack. In his agonies he confessed a treasonable intercourse with the Milanese, and other enemies of the Republic ; the truth of his guilt rests on doubtful grounds, but the unhappy father was compelled to condemn his son to banishment for life.

In 1450 he was recalled from exile by the Government, under an accusation of having assassinated one of the Council of Ten^{*}, and again subjected to torture ; although no proof of his guilt was substantiated, he was ordered to a more distant and severe exile. Even after the crime of this murder had been confessed by another, the Council refused to mitigate the unjust sentence they had

* The history of Carmagnola has been beautifully dramatized by Manzoni.

passed on Giacopo, who was denied all intercourse with his family, and forbidden to return to his native city.

Worn down in body and mind by domestic griefs, Francesco Foscari implored permission to resign the ducal bonnet, but in vain ; he was compelled to take an oath that he would retain his office until death, and was obliged to drain that bitter cup of sorrow which is reserved for those in power, when the secret griefs of the heart are mocked by outward show and pomp.

Few instances are recorded of such a devoted and enduring attachment to their native land as Giacopo Foscari evinced. While smarting under his unjust treatment, his love of country yet triumphed over all his sufferings ; and in order to revisit Venice, which had so inhumanly driven him from her bosom, he became the traitor he had been previously thought. A letter, which he had addressed to the Duke of Milan, was intercepted, and Giacopo heard with joy the summons back to Venice, knowing as he did that disgrace and torture only awaited him. Although he at once frankly confessed that he had written the treasonable letter, he was again subjected to the fearful question. Tortured until life was almost extinct, lacerated and senseless, he was conveyed back to prison ; and returned to consciousness only to hear from his

wretched father's lips the fatal decree of banishment pronounced by the Senate. "Go, my son," said the broken-hearted old man, as he leaned on his staff, for the last time in the presence of his only son, "Go, Giacompo ! submit to the will of your country, and seek for nothing further." Giacompo died soon after, but Francesco was reserved for more sorrow and humiliation. Loredano, a Venetian noble, whose father and uncle had been condemned to death by Foscari, had long watched his opportunity of vengeance, and now excited the Senate against him ; he was accused of neglecting his public duties, and requested to resign his ducal bonnet. Francesco urged the oath he had been formerly compelled to take ; but the nobles, intent on his destruction, deposed him, and commanded him to quit the palace. His patient spirit acquiesced in the decision of the Council, but his heart was broken ; and as the bells of the Campanile rang forth their joyous peal on the accession of the new Doge, he sank back and expired. It is said that Loredano, on hearing the news of his death, took down his ledger (for nobles were then merchants), and turning to a page on which were inscribed the words, " Francesco Foscari, debtor for the death of my father and uncle," he wrote on the blank leaf opposite, " He has paid me."

The taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in

1454, filled the Christian world with terror. Italy, as the near neighbour of the Ottoman Porte, trembled when the news of the progress of the arms of Mahomet the Second reached her ; and Venice,

“Europe’s bulwark ’gainst the Ottomite,”

took up arms in 1463 to arrest the advance of the Turks. Already were the flames of the villages, sacked and burned by their victorious troops, visible from the tower of the Campanile ; many towns were falling into their hands ; and Venice, who stood alone to breast the fierce invaders, was glad in 1479, after an uncertain and ignominious warfare, to purchase peace by a considerable sacrifice of territory in Dalmatia, Bosnia and Croatia.

Similar disasters awaited the Venetians in 1499, when the Sultan Bajazet broke the truce, and war was renewed. Lepanto was wrested from them ; Antonio Grimani, the commander of the Venetian forces, was carried back in disgrace and chains to Venice ; and a further peace was obtained by the abandonment of the Peloponnesus to the Turks in 1503. Harassed abroad, Venice was now threatened by more near and fatal enemies. Austria, France and Spain, jealous of her increase of power, and headed by Pope Julius the Second, signed the celebrated League of Cambray, agreeing amongst themselves to destroy this ancient republic and

divide its territories. Undismayed, the Venetians prepared for war, and D'Alviano was chosen general; but their whole force was unable to resist these powerful antagonists, who now attacked their cities and overran the provinces of Italy subject to their dominion. At length dissension, fomented by Julius himself, sprang up between the allies; Louis the Twelfth of France, deserted and oppressed by the Emperor Maximilian and Ferdinand of Spain, sought to form an alliance with her former enemy Venice, who, being hard pressed by the other European powers, consented, and a treaty was signed, which was subsequently ratified by Francis the First. At length Venice obtained peace, after a struggle that had cost her many of her continental possessions.

I cannot here detail the contests in Italy between Charles the Fifth of Germany and Francis the First of France, nor narrate the part which Venice took in them. At the Peace of Cambray, signed in 1528 between these famous rivals, the republic found rest; and in the subsequent wars carried on by them she maintained an armed neutrality. For thirty years Venice was blest by peace, and while all Italy lay crushed beneath the yoke of the usurper Charles the Fifth, she alone, "throned on her hundred isles," retained some signs of vigour and freedom.

I must hasten to conclude this long letter, briefly noticing the remaining events which mark the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The war renewed in 1537 with the Turks lasted three years, during which period Venice lost some of her possessions in the Morea, and many islands in the Archipelago; and at a later period Cyprus was wrested from her. In 1645 Candia fell before the arms of the Sultan Ibrahim: the ruinous warfare attending this event endured for twenty-five years. After a short period of tranquillity the flames of discord again burst forth in the Morea; and Venice, conquered and disabled, abandoned all hope of maintaining her territories, and never after engaged in war with the Turks.

The Republic was now fast sinking:—her power broken, her nobles impoverished, her city depopulated, her treasury empty and burthened with a heavy debt, the fate of this haughty state was sealed. What an humiliating contrast does Venice present at this period of her decline to the power and independence she once boasted, when poets and historians sounded her praises, as scarcely second to Rome in her days of greatness and freedom! Compare her now, enfeebled and expiring, on the eve of the extinction of her name as an independent state, and with neither the power to resist tyranny nor the energy which a free spirit

puts forth even in death—compare her thus humbled, with the description of the poet in the middle ages :

“ Queen of Italia’s sons—most beautiful !
 Rival of lofty Rome—who land and waves
 Rulest, and makest citizens thy kings.
 Ausonia’s light and glory ! thou by whom
 We are a race of freemen—thou to whom
 We owe our freedom from barbarian rule,
 That brighter shines the rising sun upon our land *.”

You remember too the madrigal composed by Striggio (in 1578), which my father showed us, in praise of Venice :

“ Ninfa, che dal superbo Adriaco seno
 Cinta di rose il cresco oro lucente,
 Quasi Aurora sorgendo, l’oriente
 Vincesti di colore e di sereno,
 Ogni raggio celeste, ogni terreno
 Lume, al vag’ apparir del tuo splendore
 Sparve, sì come suole
 Fuggir stella minore
 A l’ apparir del sole ! †”

Napoleon, after he had conquered Lombardy, was marching to Germany to attack Vienna ; and

* Sanazzaro’s Elegies.

† “ Nymph, who springing from the bosom of the proud Adriatic, thy gold and shining locks crowned with roses, like Aurora rising, surpasses the East in brightness and in beauty ; before thy glorious splendour every celestial beam, every earthly light fades away, as does the lesser star before the approach of the sun.”

Venice, aroused from apathy by the danger which now threatened her, feebly and tardily attacked the French troops left in command of the Lombard towns. This ineffectual assistance was not remembered by the court of Vienna, for, when making terms with Buonaparte, Venice was abandoned by her ally. Napoleon had always coveted the possession of Venice, and vowed to prove a second Attila if she resisted his power. The Senate trembled as they heard his denunciations; Manini, the Doge, counselled the deliverance of the city; and in the ballot, which was loudly demanded, on which the freedom or slavery of Venice hung, twelve votes alone were given in favour of resistance to the French, whilst five hundred and twelve sealed the fate of the republic; and Venice fell, as the sound of the cannon of the invaders but faintly reached them from the main-land. In a few hours the tricolour floated over the sanctuary of St. Mark, and Napoleon's general, entering at the head of his troops, took possession of the city on March 16th, 1797. At the treaty of Campo Formio, signed a few months afterwards, Venice was given to Austria, under whose iron rule she has remained since; and

“ Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!”

LETTER XV.

Venice, June 2nd.

ALTHOUGH my expectations about Venice had been highly raised, they are more than realized; my admiration of this singular and beautiful city increases every hour, and I cannot convey in writing the feeling of delight and enthusiasm which everything around me excites. I must begin the account of our last two days, each hour of which has been marked by new and increasing pleasure. The morning of Monday dawned in matchless beauty; before ten o'clock our gondola was announced, and quickly laying aside our letters and journals, we hastened down, and were soon floating away to the Rialto. There we landed, and crossed the celebrated bridge, once the mart of Oriental and European commerce, thronged with people of all nations—the busy Change of the world—now, silent and deserted. This singular structure is of great width, with three separate passages on it, to which flights of steps conduct. Shops line the bridge on either side,

which are chiefly occupied by goldsmiths. In the actual beauty of the bridge of the Rialto I was disappointed, but it has an interest independent of its present state or past glory, as the feigned resort of Shylock.

This is the only bridge across the Grand Canal, which runs through Venice in the form of an S, while a hundred smaller ones branch off in every direction. The banks of this principal canal are lined with palaces, now in decay, deserted by the once powerful families, whose pride and power are extinct, and whose poverty renders them unable to inhabit them. Many were pointed out to us which still bear the names of their former occupiers—names familiar in Venetian history; amongst them was that of the Foscari, now tenantless and in ruin. We may turn with disgust from the scenes of treachery and horror which Venice has witnessed, and acknowledge the justice of her fate; but the heart must be cold, which, in contemplating its desolation, does not mourn that such beauty is destroyed.

Leaving the Grand Canal, we turned into the smaller ones, and after wandering for some time through these narrow passages, so truly Venetian in character, passing under the numerous bridges which span them, I recognized in one the Bridge of Sighs, and soon we issued on the open space

before the Piazzetta of St. Mark. Turning from this attractive spot, we steered for the church of San' Giorgio Maggiore, a fine specimen of the architecture of Palladio, situated on an island in the open Lagune.

This morning we have seen several of the churches, with which Venice abounds, reserving till tomorrow our visit to St. Mark's. That of La Madonna della Salute, standing at the entrance to the Grand Canal, is a noble edifice, which was erected in honour of the Virgin after she had miraculously interposed to save the city from the plague. The altarpiece is a sculptured representation of this miracle: Venice, personified as a female figure, is seen imploring aid from the Madonna, who sends an angel to drive away the pestilence, which is typified by an old misshapen hag. There are some fine pictures in this church—several by Titian, and amongst them a grand one of the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

The church of Il Redentore is another fine Palladian building. How delightful was our excursion, rowing thus from church to church! our gondola drawing up at the steps which rise from the water's edge, we sprang on shore, and having seen the church, resumed our places, and floated away to some new object of interest. I can give you no idea of the pleasure of gliding about in

the gondolas—no other boating can be compared to it ; with a swift and gentle motion these slender barks skim along the waters, which they seem scarcely to touch. The gondoliers guide them with astonishing dexterity : sometimes in the narrow canals, when they meet large barges and you think a crash inevitable, they glide by without touching, through spaces which any one but a Venetian gondolier would deem it impossible to pass. The boat is often managed by one man, sometimes there are two ; one stands at the stern and guides the gondola by means of a long oar, which he dips into the water and pushes from him. The luxury of this mode of conveyance cannot be imagined by those who have not visited Venice.

The last church we saw was the Chiesa dei Frari, interesting from the ancient monuments it contains, amongst which are many erected to persons celebrated in history. The Foscari and many other Doges are buried here, and the head of Francesco Carmagnola is preserved in a chest over the entrance-door. A simple slab of stone covers the grave of Titian ; it bears this short inscription :

“ Quì giace il gran Tiziano di Vecelli,
Emulatore de’ Zeusi e degli Apelli.”

A noble monument, near this stone, has been raised to the memory of Canova, with which an

interesting fact is connected : about fifty years ago a subscription was made to erect a monument to Titian, which Canova designed ; the execution of this was, however, stopped by the fall of the republic, and in the monument of the great sculptor his own design was adopted. It is very beautiful : a half-opened door occupies the centre of a pyramid of Carrara marble and a graceful veiled figure representing Sculpture advances with a funereal urn ; behind her is the genius of this art, bearing a torch, and followed by two allegorical figures of Painting and Architecture with their attendant genii, each carrying a wreath to hang on the tomb of the great master. They are ascending the steps on one side, which conduct to the door, and on the other is a sleeping lion, and the genius of Life with an extinguished torch. A medallion-bust of Canova surmounts the whole, encircled by a serpent. The cost of this monument, like that of Guttenberg's statue at Mainz, was defrayed by many nations, all eager to pay homage to the talent of Canova. Valery says that England furnished one-fourth of the money, France and Germany contributed another, America sent her tribute, and Italy supplied the rest. The monument, bears this simple inscription : "Ex consolatione Europæ universæ."

Our next object of attraction was the Arsenal :

there is no spot in Venice more intimately connected with the times of her power and grandeur. Here were constructed the galleys so celebrated for their strength and lightness, and here kept in constant readiness for war, with magazines of arms. It was like a city surrounded by walls and towers, governed by its own magistrates: three nobles were appointed to regulate the internal arrangements and watch over the safety of the Arsenal; it was considered one of the most important elements of the power of the Republic, and was watched over with a jealous care. Not only were all the stores required in war preserved here, but everything was manufactured within its walls. The rope-walk is itself a building of enormous size, and may give an idea of the scale on which warlike preparations were carried on in Venice. The Arsenal contained accommodation under cover for the building and completing of thirty-six galleys. Everything fabricated within its walls was stamped with the seal of St. Mark, and regarded as sacred; the theft of anything thus marked was deemed a capital offence.

We entered this famous magazine of war by the principal gate, before which, as if to guard it, stand four lions, spoils taken from conquered nations. One was brought from Corinth, another from the Piræus, and a third has "Attica" inscribed

on it. Following a guide, we went first to the halls containing the ancient armoury ; here we saw many Turkish banners, standards with horses' tails floating from them, and arms of every description, taken from the Turks in the famous battle of Lepanto, in 1568 ; also the helmet of Attila and many curious specimens of ancient armour. Here are kept the galleys which have been used to convey the emperors of Austria to Venice, when they have visited their conquered city, and that which transported the empress of Napoleon. If any patriot hearts yet beat in Venice, these badges of slavery preserved in their own formidable arsenal must make them throb with indignation.

The Bucentaur existed until the time of the French conquest, when it was plundered and broken up, and nothing now remains but its flag-staff. A model of this magnificent galley gave me some idea of the splendour of that nuptial ceremony in which it so conspicuously appeared, when the Doge, seated at the stern beneath a canopy of crimson velvet fringed with gold, surrounded by his court, embarked at the stairs of the palace. Perhaps the world could offer no spectacle so gorgeous as the Lagune of Venice then presented. Innumerable gondolas covered the surface of the sparkling waters ; crowds of people lined the shore, eager to behold the departure of the Bucentaur ;

banners waved, and amidst the deafening shouts of the populace and a loud and brisk discharge of artillery, mingled with the sound of musical instruments, the stupendous vessel slowly moved from the shore. The brilliancy of an Italian sun and the transparent beauty of a Venetian sky added their influence to heighten the splendour of the enchanting scene, for the ceremony took place only on a bright and sunny day. The admiral of the Arsenal, to whom, as pilot of the Bucentaur, the whole arrangement of the day was entrusted, was, from time immemorial, obliged to take an oath that no storm should occur to interrupt the ceremony; and in order to preserve his oath inviolate, he for weeks previously studied the state of the atmosphere, and fixed the day accordingly. It was the privilege of the workmen belonging to the Arsenal to row the galley, who, as they rowed, sang a ballata in the old Venetian dialect, which, transmitted from father to son in the Arsenal, was used on this occasion only.

When the splendid procession reached the Adriatic, the Doge, rising, received from the hands of the Papal Legate, who always accompanied him, the sacred ring, and he slowly lowered it, attached to a string, through a hole in the Bucentaur into the water beneath, pronouncing the usual form of the marriage ceremony; he then raised it again,

and a common wedding-ring was cast into the waves. Again the tumult of voices arose; flowers, as for a bridal, were cast in profusion on the waves, and the procession returned to the ducal palace. Although this ceremony was kept up until within a comparatively few years, it was but an idle mockery: the glory of Venice had vanished, her sovereignty over the sea had passed away, and the mere empty and traditionary show, instead of breathing joy and gladness and pride into the hearts of the people, might well have seemed to deride their fallen state.

Scarcely allowing ourselves time for dinner, we again sallied forth in our gondola to enjoy the coolness of the evening air—refreshing and delicious after the intense heat of the day. Leaving the city behind us, we rowed out into the open Lagune, and, after a pleasant little voyage of an hour, landed on the Lido*—the long, low, sandy island which shuts in the Lagune, protecting the islands of Venice from the open sea, and enclosing them as it were in a capacious harbour.

The navigation of this land-locked sea, intersected by sand-banks and islands, has always been a matter of great difficulty, and practicable only to those well acquainted with the port. From the

* This name is derived from the Latin *littus*, the shore.

Lagune there are five outlets to the Adriatic, two of which alone are navigable for large vessels; they are all defended by batteries and towers of great strength, so that Venice may well have been considered a place impregnable to invaders from the east; for had they passed the fortresses which guarded these posts, their vessels were certain of destruction amidst the islands and shoals of the Lagune.

The Republic of St. Mark has left a work scarcely rivalled in magnitude of design and grandeur of execution by any which the Romans boast. Numerous rivers emptied themselves into this upper part of the Adriatic, amongst which were some considerable streams—the Po, the Adige, the Brenta, and the Piave. I have before mentioned, that the islands on which Venice stands were formed by the mud, gravel, sand and stones brought down by these rivers and deposited at their mouths: it is easy to imagine the danger which the city would incur from a continuation of these deposits, and to avert this evil the Senate decreed, by the advice of the most skilful engineers of Italy, that the waters of the rivers should be carried to a distance from the city, where they might, without injury to Venice, fall into the open sea. An enormous wall was built, to afford additional protection to the city, extending from Malamocco to Chiozza.

On this great work the Venetians inscribed these words : "Ausu Romano, aere Veneto*."

The Lido has little to attract attention—a poor village and an insignificant church ; but we landed and crossed it, in order that we might stand on the shore of the Adriatic. A desert plain of sand is here the burial-ground of the Jews : outcasts in life, this persecuted and degraded people are denied even the poor privilege of choosing their place of sepulture ; their graves lie scattered on the shore, true but melancholy types of their condition. After walking for about a quarter of an hour, we heard the low sullen murmur of the sea,—that sound which is music to my ear—and soon saw the blue waters lying before us, looking darker and deeper from the approach of twilight. On reaching the water's edge we strolled along the level beach, picking up shells and dipping our hands in the small waves that with a gentle ripple scarcely broke upon the shore. We lingered long, unwilling to return, for the evening was one of perfect beauty. Before we reached our hotel, darkness had closed around : gondolas flitted past us, their black forms invisible on the canals, and their presence alone revealed by the lamp burning at the prow, and the sound of the oar as

* "With Roman enterprise, with Venetian money."

it dipped in the waters. "One might imagine," as Madame de Staël prettily says, "that they are spirits of the night gliding over the waters, and guided by a little star."

The songs of the Venetian gondoliers are now seldom heard; there are one or two men who profess to sing stanzas of Tasso and Ariosto, and are engaged by parties for this purpose; but such music loses very much of its charm when *performed* in this manner; it is no longer spontaneous, and one of the greatest charms in all national melodies consists in their being the natural, unsought expression of popular feeling in the language of music. We were accosted today, as we rowed along one of the narrow canals, by a man who asked us to engage him for the evening to sing some verses of Tasso, telling us that he had been Lord Byron's gondolier; we however felt no desire to purchase a gratification which would have lost its genuine interest by the very act of our paying for it.

Goethe, in one of his letters from Venice, says he was told that "the women of the Lido are accustomed to sit on the shore, when their husbands are out at sea fishing, and sing the verses of Tasso and Ariosto with loud and shrill (*durchdringend*) voices, until they catch from afar those of their husbands: thus one replies to another.

It is the song of a lonely one," he adds, "which goes forth into the distance, seeking another similarly attuned to hear and answer it*."

Thus ended our first day in Venice; and now I am weary of enjoyment and of writing, and so "felicissima notte!" as our waiter said to us when he placed the lamp on our table this evening. The salutations so often given us have something passing sweet in them. I do love the Italian language, with its gentle courtesy and graceful adaptation to person, time and place—conveying so naturally the different degrees of respect or affection implied in the use of the "ella," "voi," or the familiar "tu." How pretty, too, are its diminutives and augmentatives, with all the tribe of "issimi;" and then the words at parting—"a rivederla," "felice ritorno," "stia bene"—which, pronounced even by a stranger, have I know not what of pleasant kindliness that charms me inexpressibly.

* It is remarkable that the extract respecting the gondoliers quoted in the Notes to 'Childe Harold' from the 'Curiosities of Literature,' is for the most part in the very words of the letter of Goethe to which I have referred.

LETTER XVI.

Venice, June 4th.

THE Accademia delle Belle Arti here contains some of the master-pieces of the Venetian school of painters ; we have spent several hours amongst them this morning, and I am returned with a new feeling of admiration for these great artists. It is said that Rafael can be known only in Rome, Correggio in Parma, and Titian in Venice : to the latter opinion I now as cordially assent as I have long done to the former. This gallery boasts two glorious pictures by Titian—the ‘Martyrdom of St. Peter,’ and the ‘Assumption of the Virgin’ ; the latter holds the same rank amongst his pictures that the ‘Transfiguration’ does among Rafael’s ; Venice contains also many of Titian’s finest portraits and historical paintings.

Before speaking of the Venetian artists individually, let me say a few words of the grand characteristic of their school. I have already pointed out to you, that the school of Florence, formed under the

direction of Michael Angelo, was celebrated for its excellence in design ; that the Roman school, which boasted "the divine Rafael" as its chief ornament, was distinguished by ideal beauty of expression ; while the eclectic school of Bologna strove to unite the excellences of each. For Venice it was reserved to bring the art of colouring to perfection. Deprived of the advantages which Rome and Florence possessed in the study of the antique, the masters of this school neglected the study of anatomy, never soaring into the regions of ideal beauty of form in which Michael Angelo and Rafael delighted to wander. We do not therefore find in the works of Titian, Paolo Veronese, and the other Venetian artists, that vigour of design or that charm of grace and expression which pervade Rafael's works ; but to compensate for this deficiency, they possess a peculiar truth, harmony, and richness of colouring. The remark applied to Titian, may with equal justice be made respecting the whole school of which he was the head—that in colouring only he was ideal.

"Raffaelle and Titian," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "seem to have looked at nature for different purposes ; they both had the power of extending their view to the whole ; but one looked for the general effect as produced by form, the other as produced by colour."

In painting, the sciences of colouring and design are distinct, although the study is pursued by the artist in a combined form. Design, which is strictly the science of form, may be divided into two parts; the one relating to the beauty of individual forms, which is called "drawing;" and the other to the arrangement of various forms together, which is called "composition." Colouring also has a twofold operation, regulating on the one hand the general disposition of the local colours of the picture; and on the other, the gradations of each individual colour as affected by the transition from light into shadow. The works of Titian may be taken as the best illustration of that excellence which results from a knowledge of sound principles of colouring in both these relations, charming us no less by the general harmony and effect of his pictures, than by that wonderful truth of local or individual tint which has always been considered as the most difficult attainment in colouring.

Early in the fifteenth century, the Venetian artists—among whom I may mention the three Vivarini—were distinguished above their contemporaries of the other Italian schools for a peculiar knowledge of colouring; Gentile Bellini and his brother Giovanni, who lived toward the end of this century, may be considered the founders of

the Venetian school, and Titian was largely indebted to them for his early love of art. The fame of Gentile having reached the court of the Sultan Mahomet the Second, he was invited to Constantinople, and most graciously received. Bellini presented the Sultan with a picture representing the beheading of John the Baptist: on beholding it, the monarch complained that the skin of the neck did not present the appearance of a head recently cut off; to prove his assertion, he called a slave to him, and drawing his scymitar with his own hand struck off his head. Gentile, horrified at the sight, quickly fled from the court and returned to Italy. The paintings of these two brothers are stiff and laboured, although manifesting the elements of that science of colouring which their pupil carried to such perfection.

Tiziano di Vecelli was born in 1480 at Capodell Cadore, in Friuli, of an honourable family. His father, early discovering the bent of the lad's genius, placed him under Gentile Bellini: Titian, however, found more to admire in the works of Giovanni, and soon quitted his first master. He now made rapid progress, but was restless and dissatisfied; he saw what Art presented to his hopes, but he was conscious of the labour which

success required. Early in the sixteenth century he became acquainted with the paintings of Giorgione, who, although equally ignorant of the works of the ancients, had treated his designs with a greater breadth and vigour than the young Titian had yet seen : struck with admiration, he adopted these qualities, and his paintings thenceforward show a freer touch and greater boldness of execution. He now acquired celebrity, and was appointed to an office in Venice called *La Senseria*, the duties of which consisted in painting a portrait of each succeeding Doge, to be placed in the Ducal Palace. Notwithstanding his increased reputation, however, the remuneration Titian received for his works was so small that he lived in great poverty, until, through his friend Pietro Aretino, he was recommended to the notice of Charles the Fifth. Previously to this he had been invited by Alfonso the First, duke of Ferrara, to visit his court ; there he became acquainted with Ariosto, who thus speaks of his friend in his great poem :

“ E Tizian che honora
Non men Cadore che quei Venezia e Urbino.”

During his residence in Ferrara, Titian painted a portrait of the Duke ; and Michael Angelo, when

he saw it, exclaimed, "Titian alone is worthy the name of a painter !" A portrait of Ariosto, taken probably at this time, is now in the Manfrini palace, and a more beautiful picture I have never seen. In portraits Titian is unrivalled ; his power of faithfully imitating nature here showed itself in full perfection. Fuseli says, "Tiziano is the father of portrait-painting—of resemblance with form, character with dignity, grace with simplicity, and costume with taste. His tone springs out of the subject—grave, solemn, gay or soothing ; his eye tinged nature with gold, without impairing her freshness."

Charles the Fifth, jealous of his rival Francis the First, who had attached Leonardo da Vinci to his court, succeeded in tempting Titian, by great offers of patronage, to reside at Vienna. Many anecdotes are related of this period of his life, and of the honour paid him by the emperor : on one occasion, when the nobles of his court were betraying jealousy of the attention and deference shown to the artist, Charles exclaimed, "I can create a thousand nobles when I will, but God alone can make a Titian." The emperor sat to him repeatedly, and one day, when the artist dropped his pencil, Charles stooped to pick it up, and presenting it to him, said, "To wait on Titian is service for an emperor."

When more advanced in life, Titian, in 1545, went to Rome, where he was received with the honour due to his high rank as an artist. Michael Angelo said, after visiting him there, "I am convinced that, if this man were as much assisted by Art as he is by Nature, no mortal could exceed him: but certain it is, that the Venetians, not having studied the best works of the ancients, know not how to mend, or give a grace and perfection to their works beyond their model, which is never perfect in all its parts*." Sir Joshua Reynolds, speaking of Titian, says, "in colouring he was a genius, in design not much above a mere copier."

He was created Count Palatine by Charles the Fifth when he visited him in Spain, and afterwards retired to Venice, where he continued to paint unremittingly until his last days—not as a necessary labour, but as his chief source of delight. His love of art was intense; not all his dazzling and brilliant success could lure him from its pursuit; and he continued to improve until his death, which took place at the advanced age of ninety-six years: he died of the plague in 1576.

Giorgio Barbarelli—or, as he is more generally called, Giorgione—was the companion and rival

* These anecdotes are taken from Northcote's 'Life of Titian.'

of Titian. The character which is ascribed to him, of a noble high-mindedness, seems stamped upon his works ; there is more of refinement and of soul in his portraits than we find in those of his contemporaries ; by nature he seems to have been more richly endowed than Titian. While Giorgione's career was terminated by death at the age of thirty-four, Titian continued to advance in art through a life extended beyond the usual duration, and it was by the study of many years that he attained such acknowledged eminence. Giorgione had early learned to despise the mannerism of the Bellini, under whom he studied, and adopted a style of his own ; his pencil had acquired a boldness and freedom unknown in the Venetian school ; his acquaintance with the works of Leonardo da Vinci afterwards disclosed to him the charm of the effects produced by *chiaro-oscuro*, and added new grace and spirit to his designs.

Fra Sebastiano del Piombo was the favourite pupil of Giorgione, and so well did he profit by the instruction of his master, and perfect himself in the art of colouring, that Michael Angelo, when he entered into competition with Rafael, was glad to avail himself of his skill in this branch of the art, to supply his own deficiency.

Tintoretto was so called from being the son of a dyer ; his real name was Jacopo Robusti. He

was originally a pupil of Titian, but his master growing jealous of his talents expelled him from his studio. The youth continued to pursue painting with unabated ardour, and Titian, whose soul was not superior to the base passion of envy, became alarmed at his progress. Tintoretto soon afterwards founded a school, and having procured casts of the celebrated statues on the tombs of the Medici, by Michael Angelo, he thence acquired a better insight into the true principles of Art ; while by attending anatomical lectures he obtained a practical knowledge of the human figure. In his studio he inscribed these words : “ *Il disegno di Michel Angelo, ed il colorito di Tiziano.*” His paintings vary much in excellence, from want of a uniform diligence in completing what he undertook ; but in his best works there is great originality, and an unbounded power of conquering those difficulties in design and attitude, which, like Michael Angelo, he delighted in courting. In colouring he is inferior to Titian, while in design he far excels his master : he was often heard to declare that beautiful colours were to be procured at shops, but that beauty of design sprang only from the genius of the artist.

How can words describe the gorgeous beauty of the paintings of Paolo Veronese ? The brilliancy of colouring, the magnificence of costume, the as-

semblage of gay and courtly figures, the beautiful architecture, the rich costly ornaments—all combine to impart a splendour to his pictures which may give us some idea of the luxury and brilliancy of Venice in her days of glory: the magnificent dresses and rich brocades were doubtless copied from Venetian costume, and in the pictures of Paolo Cagliari (called Veronese from his birth-place) we see a type of the stately grandeur of the Doge's court. The subjects he delighted in were feasts or suppers, in which he introduces numberless figures, many of them portraits; the architecture and decorations of the hall, the vessels and ornaments of the table, were subjects well adapted for the display of his rich colouring. His son Carlo died at the age of twenty-five, having given, in his youthful efforts as an artist, a promise of surpassing his father. Guido, lost in admiration of the paintings of Paolo, is said to have exclaimed, "Were it allowed me to choose what painter I would be, it is Paolo Veronese; in others we discover vestiges of art, in him all is nature*."

Jacopo da Ponte—better known by the name of Bassano, the town at which he was born—may be placed in striking contrast to the above-mentioned artist. Possessing, like Paolo, many

* Lanzi's History of Painting.

attributes peculiar to the Venetian school, he deviated from their manner, and struck into a bold and vigorous style of his own. His colouring is beautiful as it is extraordinary; "his colours," says Lanzi, "sparkle like gems, especially his greens, which possess an emerald tinge peculiar to himself." His long residence in the country naturally led him to introduce into his pictures the objects around him: cattle and the brazen utensils common in a country kitchen are constantly seen in his paintings, and his figures are rather copies from those which he found in his native place, than studies from any of the models which other artists selected for beauty of form and feature. There is a simplicity and truth in his designs, a harmony and tone of colour in his paintings, which are truly admirable*. His sons were far inferior to their father, although a strong resemblance in style is perceptible in their works, particularly in those of Leandro.

Of the two Palmas—Jacopo il Vecchio and Jacopo il Giovane—I have little to say. The works of the former are chiefly remarkable for their exquisite finish, and his female and infant heads display much grace and beauty. Palma Giovane, had he lived at any other period, would

* A portrait by Bassano, lately added to our National Gallery, is a fine specimen of this artist's colouring.

have ranked amongst the first artists ; but in contending with Titian, Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese, he necessarily occupied a secondary position. His pictures were valued however even in those days, and much admired by Guercino and Guido.

Here I must end my account of the Venetian painters. The Accademia delle Belle Arti contains a splendid collection of the works of this school, and amongst them ‘The Presentation of the Virgin and Infant at the Temple,’ by Titian. The figure of Sant’ Anna, the mother of Mary, is dignified and full of feeling: she is standing at the foot of the stairs of the Temple, watching with maternal anxiety the little child ascending them alone ; while the groups of figures around are given with power and spirit ; altogether it is a noble composition. ‘The Assumption of the Virgin’ by the same master adorns this collection, in which are also preserved the first and last paintings he executed. I cannot attempt to catalogue its treasures, and will only mention one or two which amused me from their strange conceits and anachronisms. In an ‘Ascension’ by Tintoretto is a figure of our Saviour springing from the tomb, bearing a banner of victory, and in the corner are introduced three half-length portraits of grave old Venetian senators. In another painting

two Dominican friars are brought in as witnesses of the ‘Incredulity of St. Thomas.’ Many of the pictures represent ancient customs of the Venetians, ceremonies and processions now obsolete ; these are valuable as preserving the memory of what might otherwise be forgotten.

The Manfrini Palace is filled with choice specimens of the Venetian school, and contains many of Titian’s exquisite portraits ; the one of his friend Ariosto I have already mentioned. The beauty of these is sung by many poets, and amongst others by Pietro Aretino, who wrote these lines on a portrait of Don Diego Mendoza :

“ Chi vuol veder qual Tiziano Apelle
Fa dell’ arte, una tacita natura,
Miri il Mendoza, si vivo in pittura
Che nel silenzio suo par che favella*.”

The following sonnet was written by Giovanni della Casa on Titian’s picture of Lady Elizabeth Quirini :

“ Ben vegg’ io, Tiziano, in forme nuove
L’ idolo mio, che i begli occhi apre e gira
In vostre vive carte, e parla e spira
Veracemente, e i dolci membri muove.

* “ Let him who would behold how Titian Apelles makes of art a silent nature, look at Mendoza,—so living in a picture, that in his silence he appears to speak.”

E piacemi che il cuor mio doppio ritrove
 Il suo conforto, ove talor sospira :
 E mentre che l' un volto e l' altro mira
 Brama il vero trovar, nè sa ben dove*."

Hearing that the Barbarigo Palace was the residence of Titian during the last years of his life, and that some of the rooms were preserved in the state in which he left them at his death, I went to it, expecting to see much to interest me, but was disappointed. It is in a grievous state of dilapidation, and the cracked and faded paintings, shown as some of the last works of Titian, are scarcely to be recognised as his.

Before returning home we went to the house of a wealthy Jew named Trevi, to see Canova's statues of Hector and Ajax, which are amongst his best works. The heroes are in an attitude of defiance, and there is a fine contrast in the figures, which heightens the beauty of each. The graceful, yet firm and powerful form of the noble Trojan showed

* "Titian ! it is herself, in other guise
 Thy living tints my idol here present ;
 See ! she now opes, now turns her beauteous eyes ;
 She speaks, she breathes—nay, seems to move, intent !
 What joy is mine, amid continual sighs,
 Here to regain some portion of content,
 As now on her, now this sweet image bent,
 My doubting heart to find the impostor tries !"
(Northcote's Life of Titian.)

well beside the giant and muscular frame of Ajax. I am surprised to find so few of Canova's works in Venice, and these are for the most part inaccessible to strangers. We have made several efforts to see the group of Dædalus and Icarus, in the Barbarigo Palace, but it is kept in the private apartments, and we petition in vain. Venice is justly proud of her great sculptor: his right-hand is preserved in the Accademia, the left is in Rome; his body lies at Possagno, his native village; and the monument in the Chiesa dei Frari contains only his heart.

I shall conclude my letter by subjoining a list of the greatest painters of the Venetian school. Giovanni Bellini.—Gentile Bellini.—Tiziano di Vecelli.—Giorgio Barbarelli (Giorgione).—Sebastiano del Piombo.—Lorenzo Lotto.—Jacopo Robusti (Tintoretto).—Paolo Cagliari (Veronese).—Carlo Cagliari.—Paris Bordone.—Pordenone.—Jacopo da Ponte (Bassano).—Jacopo Palma (Palma Vecchio).—Jacopo Palma (Palma Giovane).—Andrea Schiavone.

LETTER XVII.

Venice, June 6th.

WE have devoted this whole morning to the wonders of St. Mark's, and I must try to give you a detailed account of them while they are still fresh in my memory. As it was our intention to spend many hours in the examination of the Basilica, we determined to walk to the Piazza of St. Mark, reserving our gondola excursion for the evening. After passing through many narrow crooked streets and small piazzas, which are the only *terra firma* in Venice, we issued on this magnificent Piazza. I do not think that any spot in Europe can offer a more beautiful or striking *coup d'œil* than it presents when entered from beneath the portico facing the church of St. Mark. The square is on three sides surrounded by arcades of rich and elegant architecture, the work of Sansovino ; but the Basilica, which occupies the fourth, chiefly arrests the attention.

This singular and wonderful church stands a

monument of the ancient magnificence of Venice ; no spot within her limits recalls so forcibly the times of her greatness and supremacy as this. Before the church stand the three flag-staffs from which floated the standards of the conquered and tributary kingdoms of the East ; and although the banners no longer remain, the poles are there, “monuments of the conquests of Candia, Cyprus, and the Morea.” The Basilica is a vast depository of eastern spoils—marbles, columns, bronzes and mosaics—all memorials of the time when the victorious galleys of the republic returned laden with the spoils of distant conquest. When Constantinople, the magnificent metropolis of the Eastern empire, fell before the arms of the Crusaders, and was stripped of the treasures of her palaces and churches, Venice came in for a large share of the plunder. Thus while modern Rome was adorned with the relics of ancient Rome, the seat of Western empire, Venice preserved in her sanctuary the spoils of Constantinople, the metropolis of that of the East.

The architecture of the façade of St. Mark’s is of the most mixed and extraordinary kind ; true to no style, no order, nor even to one country, it is, as Forsyth says, “neither Greek, nor Gothic, nor Basilical, nor Saracenic, but a fortuitous jumble of all.” The roof is covered with small cu-

polas like mosques, and rows of arches are piled one above another, without use, and certainly without beauty. Nevertheless the whole presents such magnificence, and recalls so many thoughts of past grandeur, that even the critic whose knowledge may give him a right to severity in judgment, must stand in wonder and even admiration before the church of St. Mark. There are places and buildings in which the power of historical association and of poetry set aside any standard of scientific correctness, where objects, viewed thus through the feelings,

“ without passing through the judgement, gain
The heart, and all their end at once attain.”

We entered the church through the splendid vestibule, where two blocks of red marble mark the spot rendered famous by the interview between Frederic Barbarossa and Pope Alexander the Third, which I have before mentioned. The first view of the church is most imposing; the gorgeousness of the marbles and mosaics, which would otherwise be too dazzling, is softened into solemnity by the little light that is admitted. The effect is very fine; as our eyes became accustomed to the twilight, we saw distinctly the decorations. The ceiling is almost entirely composed of mosaic, the ground of which being gold gives an inconcei-

vable splendour to the edifice. The floor, also of mosaic in marble, bears the character of great antiquity; while the columns of porphyry and marbles of every colour, black, white, and veined, of bronze, alabaster, verde antique and serpentine, which rise in profusion around, seem to overwhelm rather than add to the beauty of the building. The form of the church is a Greek cross, and the high altar is ornamented with the richest and most precious stones, jaspers, and marbles.

This church was erected in honour of the evangelist St. Mark, and as a depository of his bones, which were amongst the treasures brought from the East. In the eighth century, when the Caliphs of Egypt were despoiling the Christian churches to enrich their palace at Alexandria, the chapel containing the body of this saint being threatened by them, the priests who had care of the holy relic readily listened to the offers of some Venetian merchants who entreated permission to transport it to their native city. To convey it out of the city, however, was no easy matter, as the Alexandrians searched with jealous care all the bales that left their territory: the pious fraud by which it was effected deserves notice. The bones being placed in a chest, they were covered with the bodies of dead pigs—an animal held in abhorrence by Mahometans; the sight of the unclean beasts

stopped all search, and St. Mark was safely transported to the Venetian ships. After a stormy voyage the saint was received on his arrival at Venice with great pomp and acclamations of joy ; he was made the patron-saint of the city, his winged lion became its state emblem, and his name was associated with all the acts of this republic.

Nearly three hundred years after this event, it was discovered that the body was missing ; the coffer in which it had been preserved was found empty, and no one could tell what had become of the sacred relic. All Venice was in consternation and dismay. The Doge, the nobles, priests, and people flocked to the church. Fasts were instituted, and the saint was importuned with prayers to reveal himself to their anxious gaze by some sign, some revelation of his power. On a sudden a column opened, and an arm was thrust out ; the sacred ring on one of the fingers testified that it belonged to St. Mark himself. After this adventure, officers were appointed by the state, chosen from the nobles, and called Procuratori, whose business it was to watch over the treasury of St. Mark, and carefully guard its sacred relics, with the regalia of the court*. Amongst these was the

* The office of Procuratore of St. Mark came to be held in great estimation ; it was for life, and only nobles of the highest rank could aspire to it. Their number was at first

Ducal Bonnet ; the splendour and richness of the jewels which covered it are spoken of in terms of great admiration. The form of this crown, which is very singular, derives its origin from a curious historical circumstance. Pepin, king of France, having been defeated by the Venetians, was received by them in their infant city with every mark of honour : gratified by this generous conduct, Pepin, throwing his sceptre into the sea, exclaimed, " So perish all those who would seek to injure this republic ! " then perceiving that the Doge bore about him no mark of his high dignity, he detached a sleeve from his robe and placed it on his head ; the end of which, as it fell forward, has been imitated in the ducal bonnet.

The four bronze horses, which stand outside the portico of St. Mark's, are as celebrated for their adventures as for their beauty. They are supposed to be the work of Lysippus, a Corinthian artist ; and are said to have been presented to Nero, who caused them to be harnessed to the Chariot of the Sun, which surmounted his triumphal arch in Rome. They were removed by Constantine to his new capital, and at the conquest of Constantinople

two, which was subsequently increased to nine : they were the trustees of the state, the executors of all pious legacies, the guardians of orphans and widows, and the superintendents of all matters relating to the church.

by the Crusaders, they formed part of the valuable spoil which fell to the share of the Venetians. When Venice was taken by Buonaparte, these horses were among the many works of art which, by his command, were conveyed to Paris ; but at the peace of 1814, when France was compelled to give back these stolen treasures, they were restored to Venice, and now occupy their original position in front of the Basilica of St. Mark. They were the subject of the famous threat uttered by Paganino Doria, the Genoese admiral, who, when sued to grant peace to the exhausted Venetians, exclaimed, "Peace ! yes, when I have put a bit in the mouth of St. Mark's steeds."

The pigeons, which frequent in hundreds the Piazza of St. Mark, were objects of great interest to me : their story is connected with the early times of the republic ; they are regarded by the Venetians as sacred, and have been suffered to live from century to century in the undisturbed enjoyment of their liberty. It was an ancient custom at Venice, amongst the various ceremonies of Palm Sunday, to throw from the balcony of St. Mark's a number of birds, whose legs were tied ; the efforts made by the poor little creatures to fly were hailed by the shouts of the populace assembled in the Piazza, and the birds, terrified by the noise and by their inability to fly,

after vain attempts to escape, fell an easy prey to the spectators. On one occasion, some pigeons, having succeeded in freeing themselves from their bonds, soared aloft, and took refuge on the roof of the church, where they continued to live and multiplied rapidly; they excited a general interest, and a decree was passed by the Senate that they should be guarded from danger and fed at the expense of the State: although the republic has ceased to exist, yet these birds are still respected. “*Venise a perdu sa liberté,*” observes a French writer, “*mais ces oiseaux, toujours légers et gracieux, semblent avoir échappé à la conquête Allemande.*”

The Campanile of St. Mark's is a square tower of great height, possessing no architectural beauty whatever. We determined to ascend it for the sake of the view it affords, which is one of the most singular I have ever seen: the sea is scattered with islands, Murano, Chiozza, St. Lazzaro, the Lido, and a multitude of others, grouped around Venice, which springing from the blue waves, with its towers and palaces, forms a glorious centre to the panorama. In the distance we saw the cultivated land lying across the Lagoon, and the summits of the Friuli mountains rising majestically beyond. It was a scene not easily described, and one never to be forgotten.

From the top of this tower Galileo made some of his most important astronomical observations.

The tower which stands on the right of St. Mark's contains an old clock of very curious mechanism ; the dial-plate is mosaic, with an azure ground, gold figures and hands, and surmounted by a figure of the Virgin seated on a throne, holding the infant Christ in her arms. At stated times (I believe every hour) a small side-door opens, and the three Magi, preceded by an angel with a trumpet, enter, march along a little gallery in front of the Madonna, to whom they make their obeisance, and depart at an opposite door. We were fortunate enough to see this singular procession, and I could not help laughing at the unexpected apparition of the droll and antique figures, and the stately manner in which they went through their evolutions.

Having exhausted our powers of enjoyment, and being oppressed by the intense heat, we returned to our hotel, to recruit, and prepare for our afternoon's excursion. At four o'clock we were "once more upon the waters," steering for the island of St. Lazzaro, which lies near the Lido, and on which is situated the Armenian convent*.

* I have retained the word Convent,—the name I find applied to this institution,—although it appears inconsistent to speak of a convent of monks, as Byron and others have

Of this fraternity Lord Byron speaks in the highest terms of praise ; during his residence in Venice he was a constant visitor there, spending many hours of almost every day in learning the Armenian language from the fathers. It was our good fortune to have as our guide round the establishment the monk who had been his instructor, the Father Paschal whom he mentions in one of his letters to Mr. Murray as “ a learned and pious soul.” He seemed delighted to talk of his former pupil, and all he said interested us deeply. With the violence of Byron’s passions, his uncontrolled feelings and misdirected energies, the worthy father could have no sympathy ; but his bright eye kindled with pleasure and pride as he pointed out to us the chair which Byron always occupied, the corner of the table at which he used to study, and his own place beside him. There was something strangely interesting in listening to this monk, as he spoke of one whose path in life had led through scenes so different from his own, and whose character had been formed amidst such opposite influences :—the one finding peace and rest and happiness (for his whole countenance bespoke it) in the quiet fulfilment of his daily duties, within the narrow sphere of a done. Whether the Armenian Church differs from that of Rome in this respect I cannot say.

monastic life ; while the other, wealthy and of noble birth, endowed with talents such as earth rarely sees, free to wander where he would, was a prey to his morbid fancies, the victim of his own unhappy feelings, seeking in every quarter of the globe that peace which awaited him only in death. Father Paschal told us, that often when he arrived at the convent he was full of discontent, out of humour with himself and disgusted with the world ; “ then,” said the good man, “ I endeavoured to blend a gay and cheerful tone with more serious thoughts, and gradually he regained serenity.” He prosecuted the study of the Armenian language with great diligence, and succeeded in conquering many of its difficulties. He assisted in compiling an English and Armenian grammar, and lent his aid in a translation of the Bible, made by these monks from a manuscript in their own language, which they assert to be the most ancient extant.

Opening the small drawer of a table, Father Paschal drew out a sheet of paper, and begged that one of us would read it aloud. It was a copy of the following fragment, which was found among Lord Byron’s papers ; I am tempted by its interest to extract it.

“ At this period I was struck—in common, I believe, with every other traveller—with the society

of the Convent of Saint Lazarus, which appears to unite all the advantages of a monastic institution without any of its vices. The neatness, the comfort, the gentleness, the unaffected devotion, the accomplishments and the virtues of the brethren of the order, are well fitted to strike the man of the world with the conviction that ‘there is another and a better’ even in this life. These men are the priesthood of an oppressed and a noble nation, which has partaken of the proscription and bondage of the Jews and the Greeks, without the sullenness of the former or the servility of the latter. This people has attained riches without usury, and all the honours that can be awarded to slavery without intrigue. But they have long occupied, nevertheless, a part of the ‘house of bondage,’ who has lately multiplied her many mansions. It would be difficult, perhaps, to find in the annals of history a nation less stained with crimes than that of the Armenians, whose virtues have been those of peace, and their vices those of compulsion. But whatever may have been their destiny, and it has been bitter, whatever it may be in future, their country must ever be one of the most interesting on the globe, and perhaps their language only requires to be more studied to become more attractive. If the Scriptures are rightly understood, it was in Armenia that Paradise was placed—Ar-

menia, which has paid as dearly as the descendants of Adam for that fleeting participation of its soil in the happiness of him who was created from its dust. It was in Armenia that the flood first abated, and the dove alighted. But almost with the disappearance of Paradise itself may be dated the unhappiness of the country ; for though long a powerful kingdom, it was scarcely ever an independent one ; and the Satraps of Persia and the Pachas of Turkey have alike desolated the region where God created man in his own image."

A printing-office is attached to the convent, from which many curious ancient Armenian manuscripts have issued ; these circulate widely in Armenia, together with various works translated from the European languages ; amongst the latter we saw a *Paradise Lost*, dedicated to Lord William Russell, who had studied Armenian in the convent and assisted in making the translation. We were shown the printing-office, the church and the library ; the latter is a pleasant, cheerful-looking room, filled with books. Whilst one of the brethren took the gentlemen of our party to the different cells, we awaited their return in the garden with our kind host, still conversing of Byron.

The garden is kept with the greatest care and attention, and we were abundantly supplied with the roses which grew luxuriantly around. The

view of Venice from the terrace-walk is very beautiful, and the sun, which was slowly sinking behind the distant mountains, lighted the whole scene with a brilliant glow. There was a peaceful tranquillity in the spot that enchanted me, and I could almost have envied these good fathers their little terrestrial Paradise. We were reluctant to depart, but after exchanging a few more words with the courteous monk, we stepped into our gondola, and felt as we rowed away that few of the spots we had visited in our long journeyings had so agreeably impressed us*. The establishment contains twenty-four monks, who superintend a school of thirty pupils. In the portico before the church-door is a monument, erected by Alexander Wreford, an Englishman, who, delighted at the beauty of the situation of the convent and the goodness of its inhabitants, asked permission to leave this memorial behind him : he has never since been heard of by the Armenian fathers.

* One expression which Father Paschal used in our conversation made me hesitate whether I was at liberty to put in print what passed during our visit to the convent. He said, "I may speak to you, for you will not put me in a book, as others have done." I cannot however consider it any breach of trust to take an opportunity of acknowledging the kindness we received from this worthy man : certainly, at the time I conversed with him, I had little idea of ever publishing what I recorded in my journal.

LETTER XVIII.

Venice, June 7th.

WE are just returned from the Ducal Palace, where we have spent a long and most delightful morning. Our gondola left us at the Piazzetta, one side of which is formed of the façade of the Palace, the other is partly occupied by the arcade of the Nuove Procuratie, a building erected by Sansovino and Scamozzi, the architecture of which was pronounced by Palladio to be the most beautiful of modern times. Opposite the stairs where we landed are two lofty red granite columns, which have stood for many centuries trophies of Venetian conquest, having been brought from the east by Domenico Micheli in 1125. The following anecdote is related of their erection, which took place some years after on the spot they now occupy. The architect being promised any reward for rearing these pillars, he demanded that games of chance, which had been prohi-

bited in Venice, should be allowed to be played between these columns. The senate was bound to comply with his request ; but to counteract in some measure the effect of the permission, they appointed that all public executions should take place on this spot, which thus was rendered a place of abhorrence and of blood. One of these columns is surmounted by the winged lion of St. Mark, and the other by St. Theodore, an early patron of the city.

We entered the Palace from the Piazzetta, and found ourselves in the spacious court around which this curious building is erected. Forsyth, with correct architectural taste, sees only the glaring defects of this edifice, on which he expatiates largely ; and even a less practised eye than his can easily discover the feebleness of the style, in which long lines of arches, without stability or beauty, are made to surmount a wall. My mind, however, was too full of the thoughts and recollections which the spot awakened, to allow me to pause on the threshold to criticise the architecture, further than to wonder at and admire its Moorish and oriental character.

We soon ascended the Giant's Staircase, and here began the train of historical associations which accompanied us through every corner of the Palace,

investing each with a deep and startling interest. At the head of these stairs the Doges of Venice were crowned; and this spot Byron has made the scene of the execution of the aged Marino Faliero, who paid the forfeit of his life for his treasonable designs against the state. Although this does not agree with history (as the Giant's Staircase was not built until after the time of Faliero), yet the poet's words were in my mind as we slowly mounted the stairs :

“ Slave, do thine office !

Strike, as I struck the foe ! Strike, as I would

Have struck those tyrants ! Strike, deep as my curse !

Strike, and but once ! ”

This staircase conducts to a long open corridor ; in the walls we saw the holes in which were deposited the secret denunciations, those fearful engines of Venetian government ; the famous lions' mouths which covered them are gone, but the apertures remain.

The first room we entered was the ancient Grand Council Chamber, now the Library of St. Mark's. Every part shows the former splendour and magnificence of Venice : the ceiling is of curious workmanship, richly gilt, and the walls hung with pictures, in which the great Venetian masters have

depicted the principal events of Venetian history. The circumstances which I have before narrated of the life of Pope Alexander the Third—those, at least, in which Venice had a share—are given in a series of large paintings ; another, by Paolo Veronese, represents the triumphant return of Andrea Contarini after a victory gained over the Genoese ; and the subject of a third is the conquest of Constantinople by Enrico Dandolo. In the Apotheosis of Venice, by Paolo Veronese, the Republic is personified by a noble female figure seated in the heavens, surrounded by saints and angels ; and in other allegorical pictures she is portrayed as a queen receiving the homage of conquered nations, and breaking the chains of captive slaves ; or, seated between Justice and Peace, attended by the Virtues, she is crowned by Victory. Everywhere the ancient glory of the republic is present to the eye, and the mind is only recalled from dreams of the past by the echo of a footstep or a voice in the silent and desolate halls.

Around the cornice of this room are portraits of the Doges—many by Titian, Tintoretto, and other famous artists. The line is broken in one place, where, instead of a picture, hangs a black curtain, on which are inscribed the words, “*Hic locus est Marini Faletri decapitati pro crimini-*

bus*.” The last of this interesting series of paintings was the likeness of Ludovico Manin, the reigning Doge at the time of the fall of the republic, — he by whose cowardly advice the troops of Buonaparte were without resistance admitted as conquerors ; yet, weak as we must deem him, he was not insensible to the degradation of his country ; when called upon, at the ratification of the treaty of Campo Formio, to take the oath of allegiance to the Austrians, he fainted in the arms of his attendants.

We were interested in listening to an old man whom we accidentally met this morning ; he remembered Venice in the days of the republic, being at the time of its destruction twenty years of age. He spoke strongly and bitterly of the changes he had witnessed ; every thought seemed to be of grief that Venice was no more : “ Venezia è morta,” he said ; “ palazzi distrutti, cascati, arsi — tutto, tutto rovinato ! meglio sarebbe essere morto prima, o esser nato più tardi per non ricordarsi di tali affanni†.” We asked him what was thought of the French in Venice ; his reply

* “ This is the place of Marino Faliero, beheaded for his crimes.”

† “ Venice is dead—her palaces destroyed, fallen, burnt, all, all in ruins ! better to have died before that time, or to have been too young to remember such woe.”

was laconic and expressive : “ *Il diavolo ed i Francesi sono la stessa cosa pei Veneziani.*” He broke out into strong invectives against historians, who, he said, calumniated the republic ; but in endeavouring to defend its system of policy, he made it little less abhorrent than the bitterest foes of despotism could have done.

The next room we entered was the Hall of Scrutiny, where the election of the Doge took place ; and as the ceremony on this occasion was conducted in a very peculiar manner, I will interrupt my narrative to give you a brief account of it.

In this, as in every other part of its administration, the republic of St. Mark proved itself wise and powerful to resist the attempts of ambitious men to encroach on its dignity. The means adopted to curb the power of the aristocracy, and to preserve the election of the Doge inviolate from intrigue, were these. All the nobles of Venice above the age of thirty assembled in the Grand Council Chamber, and from an urn, in which thirty golden balls were placed with many others, each drew one ; the thirty who obtained these were reduced by lot to nine, who in their turn elected forty ; this number was again diminished to twelve, who named twenty-five ; and thus the election continued, until at length, after repeated changes,

forty-one electors were selected, on whom devolved the important charge of nominating the head of the Republic. It will readily be perceived how effectually this complicated system prevented all intrigue. The forty-one electors, having been sanctioned by the approval of the Grand Council, were shut up in the Palace of St. Mark, which they were not permitted to leave until the Doge was appointed: during the time of their seclusion they were as rigorously watched as are the Cardinals in the conclave when electing a Pope.

The Hall of Scrutiny, which was the scene of these successive elections, is also hung with pictures, amongst which is one of immense size by Palma Giovane, representing the Last Judgement. An anecdote is related of this painting: while the artist was engaged on it, he fell in love with a beautiful girl, and to do her honour he placed her likeness amongst the angels in heaven; but the lady proving inconstant before the completion of the picture, he revenged himself by again portraying her, but this time in the infernal regions, where demons are seen dragging her into a frightful abyss. Here, too, we saw many large historical pictures, representing battles with the Turks, with thirty-eight portraits of the Doges.

And now ascending another flight of stairs, we

reached the second story, where are the chambers of the Secret Councils, the Council of Ten, and the Hall of the Inquisition. These have been stripped by the French of most of their old fittings and decorations, but the first retains its original form ; a semicircular screen surrounds it, and on a raised platform within this are the Doge's throne and the seats of the senators. The Hall of the Inquisition is entirely empty, presenting nothing but bare and freshly-plastered walls.

The Venetian Government, who had the art of turning everything to its own advantage, availed itself of the terrible powers of the Inquisition as an engine of state, but rendered them completely dependent on itself and subservient to its purposes. The Inquisition, properly so called, took cognizance only of heresy and offences against the Catholic religion ; but the three officers called the Inquisitors of State were appointed independently of the holy office ; two were selected from the Council of Ten, and one from the Councillors of State ; their power was absolute over the property, persons, and lives of all men, from the Doge to the lowest of his subjects, and even foreigners of rank and power were not exempt from its fearful decrees ; from these there was no appeal. The city was filled with their spies, and a man denounced by them to the Inquisitors of

State, were his innocence clear as the light of noonday, seldom escaped death, or punishment still more to be dreaded. The most trifling circumstance served often to convict the unhappy victim of their suspicion, who, dragged from his home, and ignorant of the charge against him, was carried before the tribunal ; he was thence frequently hurried in the dead of the night to the Lagunes, and there buried in silence and darkness, or strangled in the dungeons of the Palace. The mildest punishment inflicted by this court was an order commanding the accused to quit Venice in twenty-four hours ; while the Inquisitors, wrapping all their designs in impenetrable mystery, refused to give any explanation of their conduct, or afford the unhappy exile any satisfaction as to the crime for which he was condemned.

The Senate Hall, to which we next went, retains its ancient form ; the ducal throne is still standing, and the seats for the nobles are ranged around ; a slight effort of the imagination sufficed to bring before us the forms of the Doge and his senators, with whom Titian's portraits make us so familiar.

From this we were conducted through many smaller rooms lined with beautiful paintings ; and after several doors had been unlocked, we entered a small passage ; I did not catch the name that our

guide uttered as he opened the door, but on looking out from one of the narrow windows I found that we were standing on a bridge, and I knew at once that this was the famous Ponte dei Sospiri—the Bridge of Sighs. It is divided into two galleries, by one of which the accused was led before his judges ; if he ever returned, he passed through the other. Few, however, recrossed it. The fearful tribunal, jealous of its secrets being discovered, seldom permitted those who had appeared before it to escape ; “the *justice of St. Mark*” was sure to overtake them ; and unless condemned for life to the terrible Pozzi, the dungeons built in the thickness of the palace-walls beneath the canal, these miserable beings were often strangled on the Bridge of Sighs. Well might its door have been inscribed with Dante’s words—

“Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch’ entrate !”

Hope in the mercy, or even in the justice of man, there was none ; the guilty and the innocent alike perished, victims of state policy.

Retracing our steps through these apartments, we now descended to the long corridor which I have before mentioned, and stopped at the small door leading to the Pozzi (wells). These were the dungeons of the state, and, with the Piombi (Leads), formed one of the horrible means of tor-

ture which the republic was so fertile in inventing. The Piombi were narrow cells, at the top of the Palace, and immediately under the roof of lead—used as the summer receptacles for state prisoners; and there, confined beneath the roof heated by the burning rays of a southern sun, breathing the close and suffocating air of these ovens, stung by a thousand insects which the heat generated, did these wretched beings drag on their summer days; while in winter they were consigned to the dungeons built under the palace, below the level of the canal.

I cannot describe to you the thrill of horror which seized me as we proceeded down the narrow stairs leading to these living sepulchres. Although prepared by all I had previously heard to find them gloomy and terrible, I had formed little idea of what they really were. We penetrated as far as the second story of these dungeons, and were told that, previous to the arrival of the French, another and a “deeper hell” existed beneath; but the senate, unwilling to betray the existence of these secret recesses to any stranger eye, caused the water of the canal to flow into them, and they remain filled to this day. The cells of the second tier even are below the surface of the water, ranged on each side of the narrow passage through which we passed; these were for-

merly lined with wood, having no other furniture than a wooden pallet and a counterpane ; not a ray of light ever penetrated them, not a breath of pure air visited their infected recesses ; one small round hole, scarcely a foot in diameter, opened on the dark passage without.

We saw the places for the execution of the prisoners, both by strangling and beheading—the block on which the head was laid, and the stone on which the wretched man sat or knelt ; the door was pointed out at which the gondola awaited the body, to convey it away for secret sepulture, and that by which those sentenced to be drowned were hurried away by night. The narrow cell, too, was shown us, where the friar shrived the miserable wretch, preparing him for death, while the executioner waited for his victim in the adjoining cell. Oh, what must death have been amidst scenes of such horror ! awful even in its most peaceful and tranquil approach, when it seems but the gentle visiting of sleep, what must it have been surrounded by such terror, coming in dark mysterious violence ! Thousands perished within these walls whose fate was never known ; missed from their accustomed haunts, their real fate was only guessed at, while their disappearance was attributed to accident, and any attempt to ascertain its course was followed by the death of the presump-

tuous inquirer. One part of the cruelty adopted by the Venetian government in the treatment of their prisoners has always appeared to me more like the savage invention of fiends than of men : conscious that instant execution is a mercy when known to be inevitable, they allowed their victims to linger on for months, nay even years, under an irrevocable sentence of death ; in solitude and darkness did these wretched beings await the fulfilment of their doom, knowing that every hour might be their last, that every footstep heard along the gloomy passages might be that of the messenger of death. How has the courage of the bravest been turned to cowardice, while the broken heart has lingered out a miserable existence in a state of of perpetual and agonizing suspense !

When the French took possession of Venice, they revealed to its citizens the existence of these terrible dungeons ; and the populace, admitted to behold them for the first time, were so infuriated at the sight, that they set fire to many, burning all that was combustible within them. One prisoner alone was found in the cells, an old man of seventy, who had been confined for fourteen years ; being brought too suddenly into the light of day, he became quite blind, and survived his release only one year.

I have given you but a faint idea of the impres-

sion made upon me by our visit to the Ducal Palace, but I must hasten to conclude. After scenes such as it had presented to us, there was little that could arouse our interest, and we skimmed along the narrow canals in our gondola, thinking over all that we had seen. We were again abroad in the evening, returning as usual by moonlight. Now farewell !

LETTER XIX.

Venice, June 8th.

VENICE is so connected with the early introduction of printing into Italy, that I cannot pass unnoticed the part she took in the search for, and publication of, the ancient manuscripts of Greece and Rome. The name of Aldus is venerated by all lovers of literature, as the collector, editor, and publisher of these treasures of antiquity. The first printing-office in Venice, called the *Accademia di Tipografia*, was founded by him, and from it were sent forth those editions of the classics which have retained to the present day their high value for typographical correctness and beauty. This establishment, of which no traces now exist, was rather a school of letters than a mere office for the pursuit of a mechanical art. Under the auspices of Aldus, the manuscripts brought from Greece, as well as those of Latin writers, redeemed from the monasteries of Europe, were examined, their fragments united into

a perfect whole, and finally given to the world by means of that art, the invention of which had just opened to mankind a boundless means of perpetuating and transmitting to posterity the writings and thoughts of the ancients. Old Aldus was a scholar of no common stamp : regarding his art in its true light, as one of the noblest to which man could devote himself, he bestowed great care on the beauty of his works, while he gave his mind to those labours which place his name in the first rank of the literary men of that period.

I have before adverted to the zeal of Petrarca and Boccaccio in searching for the precious manuscripts of antiquity, and will now speak of these a little more fully. Their task was one of the greatest difficulty ; the works they sought were dispersed throughout Europe, and for the most part buried in monasteries ; but the deep love of learning shown by the scholars of that period seemed to increase with the obstacles they encountered, and gave the impulse necessary for the task. Long journeys were made to procure a single manuscript ; neither money nor fatigue was spared. Even when the prize was obtained, it was often imperfect ; then further labour and research became necessary, which was sometimes repaid by the discovery of the remainder of the work ; it was like putting together the pieces of a dissected map.

When a work was completed, the only means of preserving it was to multiply it by written copies: the labour of transcribing manuscripts was immense, and a library was esteemed rich indeed which contained three or four hundred volumes. Both Petrarca and Boccaccio devoted much time to the mere mechanical employment of copying. The latter was unremitting in his diligence; he first introduced the study of the Greek language into Italy, and established a Greek professorship in Florence; he invited Leontius Pilatus from Constantinople to fill this office, and at his own expense procured Greek manuscripts for the use of the scholars; these were so precious that one copy often sufficed for a thousand pupils.

It was just after the revival of learning, at the period of the introduction of Greek, and the restoration of Latin manuscripts to Italy, that printing was invented, — at a time when of all others its importance could most be felt, its value most justly appreciated. A French writer well observes — “*Ces inventions hasardées ne sont presque toujours qu’une réponse aux besoins et à l’activité de l’esprit humain tourné plus particulièrement sur un objet.*”

Printing was invented in Germany about the

middle of the fifteenth century : Mainz claims the honour of this glorious discovery, and the name of her citizen Gutenberg, to whom we are indebted for it, is held in reverence, not only by his own countrymen, but by the whole of the civilized world*. The Italians were not slow in availing themselves of this invaluable art, and we find it adopted by them in 1465. Aldus Manutius lived in the latter part of the fifteenth century : he devoted his life and fortune to the printing of those editions of the classics which bear his name ; assisted by Andrea Navagero and others, he edited the works of Quintilian, Lucretius, Virgil, Ovid, Horace and Terence. “ We may readily imagine,” says a writer I have before quoted, “ the almost poetical enthusiasm which the appearance of this powerful art must have excited in the mind of so learned a man.” Over the door of the room in which Aldus worked was the following inscription : “ *Quisquis es, rogat te Aldus etiam atque etiam, ut si quid est quod a se velis, perpaucis agas, deinde actutum abeas ; nisi, tanquam Hercules, defesso Atlante, veneris suppositurus humeros. Semper*

* The festival in commemoration of the invention of printing was celebrated last year in Germany as a great and universal jubilee. The accounts of the festivals at Leipzig, Frankfort and Mainz were deeply interesting.

enim erit quod et tu agas, et quotquot huc attulerint pedes*.”

He died so poor that the only legacy he had to bequeath to his son was his printing-press ; but the younger Aldus knew its value ; by employing it in the prosecution of his father’s literary labours, he carried forward the great design which he had so ably begun, and thus rendered the best honour to his memory.

Our time here draws to a close : tomorrow we leave Venice, and have been endeavouring to-day to understand more clearly the localities of the city. This morning we took a walk through the narrow streets, visiting several churches on our way ; we crossed the Rialto, and soon lost ourselves in the labyrinth of lanes and streets which lie beyond. The canals, which continually crossed our path, are spanned by little bridges, and we scarcely proceeded two hundred yards without encountering one. These canals so intersect the city in every direction, that many houses are entirely surrounded by water, and there are very few which cannot be approached by it. The

* “Whoever thou art, Aldus desires you, if you require anything of him, to despatch it quickly ; and when done to depart, unless you come like Hercules, when Atlas was tired, to put your shoulders to the burden ; for there will always be work enough for you, and for as many as may resort hither, to do.”

islands of the Lagunes are said to amount to more than sixty, and our guide-book tells us that forty-five of them are occupied by the city of Venice. These are for the most part united by bridges, of which there are not less than five hundred, affording easy access to every part of the town; the arches are very lofty, in order to allow the passage of loaded gondolas and barks beneath them, and are generally ascended on each side by several steps. The canals have seldom any quay, the houses springing immediately from the water; here and there, however, a small path runs along the bank, scarcely wide enough to admit two persons to walk abreast: this shows how valuable land was esteemed by the founders of this maritime city.

The Zecca is one of the largest islands of Venice, and, being entirely detached from the city, can be reached only by gondolas; it is situated exactly opposite St. Mark's, and contains many fine churches and houses, with pleasant gardens. It was formerly inhabited by Jews, who called it the Giudecca, a name which has since been corrupted into Zecca.

The silence of Venice strikes a stranger as forcibly as the noise of Naples. All traffic is carried on by water, and there are no carriages of any kind or beasts of burthen; the only sound, except

that of human voices, is the splash of the oars as they dip into the canals*. Every species of merchandise, and the food with which Venice is well supplied, are brought from the mainland in large barges, while gondolas are the only vehicles of transportation from place to place, for the prince as well as the beggar. They vary in size and equipment; those of the rich being lined with silk and eider-down cushions, and manned by servants in livery; all, however, are painted externally black, and the *capponara* or hood which covers the stern is of black cloth. This universal custom took its origin in a decree of the senate, issued to repress the luxurious and prodigal expense of the nobles in fitting up their gondolas.

In our wanderings through the city, both by land and water, we observed many sights, which, insignificant in themselves and perhaps scarcely worth relating, yet bring to mind a hundred tales of Venetian romance and intrigue. No city was

* Madame de Staël thus describes Venice: "On ne voit pas même une mouche en ce séjour; tous les animaux en sont bannis, et l'homme seul est là pour lutter contre la mer. * * Ce n'est pas la campagne, puisqu'on n'y voit pas un arbre; ce n'est pas une ville, puisqu'on n'y entend pas le moindre mouvement; ce n'est pas même un vaisseau, puisqu'on n'avance pas; c'est une demeure, dont l'orage fait une prison, car il y a des momens où l'on ne peut sortir ni de la ville ni de chez soi."

ever so well adapted for clandestine plots, whether public and political, private and gallant, as Venice. The smooth, silent motion of the gondolas, invisible in the darkness, the balconies on every house overhanging the water's edge, the secret doors opening from the canals, the intricate and narrow passages which, leading from them, afforded an almost certain means of eluding pursuit, all gave facility to the evil designs of the crafty or ill-intentioned. Today we saw a gondola moored at the end of a street which terminated in a narrow canal: as we rowed past, a sweet and gentle-looking *signorina*, wrapped in a long veil and dressed in black, appeared, attended by several liveried servants, who all remained cap in hand while she stepped lightly into her bark. As we were quitting the steps of the Madonna della Salute, two gondolas approached; from beneath the dark and bier-like *capponara* of one a monk was issuing, while a white veil gently raised by the wind betrayed that the occupant of the other was a lady.

The dialect of the common people here is as unintelligible as the Neapolitan, and we can with difficulty understand even the names of churches and palaces; to comprehend a sentence is impossible, but its tones fall sweetly on the ear; as Madame de Staël says, “C'est doux et léger comme un souffle agréable; on ne conçoit pas comment

ceux qui ont résisté à la Ligue de Cambrai parlaient une langue si flexible.” She afterwards adds : “ L’Italien est la seule langue de l’Europe dont les dialectes différens aient un génie à part. On peut faire des vers et écrire des livres dans chacun de ses dialectes, qui s’écartent plus ou moins de l’Italien classique ; mais parmi les différens langages des divers états de l’Italie, il n’y a pourtant que le Napolitain, le Sicilien, et le Vénitien qui aient l’honneur d’être comptés ; et c’est le Vénitien qui passe pour le plus original et le plus gracieux de tous.”

We determined not to quit Venice without rowing beyond the Lagunes into the open Adriatic, and our last evening was reserved for the fulfilment of this intention. Passing the Lido, we steered for the northern outlet to the sea, but before we could well say that we had attained our desire, it was necessary to return ; night was fast approaching, and we were at a great distance from the city. Never was there a more lovely scene than that presented to us as we rowed back : we were quickly speeding our way through the blue waters, now sleeping calmly beneath the quiet evening sky ; around us the darkness was increasing, though in the distance a broad stream of golden light still lay behind the Friuli mountains, bringing their jagged summits into bold relief ; while on the other side

the pale crescent moon was rising, and soon the heavens were bright with stars—"worlds mirror'd in the ocean." Two parties passed us with music; one attended by gondoliers, who were singing, perhaps some stanzas of the Gerusalemme; their strain was sweet and wild, in harmony with the scene and with our own feelings, which were sad enough at the thought of so soon quitting this enchanting city. As we advanced we could discern the lights gleaming on the canals and in the houses; and the dark forms of the churches and towers of the city, with the mosque-like cupolas of St. Mark's, in this uncertain light, had a character so oriental that we could well imagine ourselves entering a city of the East.

It was dark when we again found ourselves in the narrow canals; nevertheless we were unwilling to return to the hotel, and ordered our gondolier to take us to St. Mark's. Beneath one of the small bridges under which we passed, four fishermen had moored their boats; each was engaged in preparing his evening mess of polenta* in an iron pot, slung between poles gipsy fashion over a small but bright wood fire, which was burning in the gondola; the light was cast strongly

* Polenta is a kind of porridge, prepared from the flour of Indian corn; it is a favourite dish with the peasantry of the north of Italy.

on the arch above them, and reflected on their picturesque and dusky figures : the group would have been a fine subject for an artist. We landed at the quay of St. Mark's, now crowded with people, and entering the Piazza we passed along the beautiful colonnades — admiring the gaily-lighted shops, and watching the figures seated in the coffee-rooms which line these arcades. The mildness of the season caused the doors of these *caffés* to be left open, and various parties quitting the heated room sought the refreshing coolness of the evening air in the arcade. It was a busy and singular scene : many were dressed in oriental costume, Turks, Greeks, and Asiatic merchants ; some deeply engaged in a game of chess ; others, seated on large divans, were smoking their long *houkas* or eastern pipes, and sipping what I supposed to be *sherbet*. We at length resolved to return, having many arrangements to make for our departure.

I have just left the balcony, determined that nothing shall tempt me to look out again. It is past midnight, and the canal is calm and silent as the grave. I have long been watching the lights as they glided swiftly past in every direction ; ever and anon the sound of music or the plashing oar broke the stillness. Now all is quiet ; the Rialto is before us, and from its highest point still shines

a bright and steady light, which is reflected in the canal in a long and brilliant line of fire, while the beams of the pale moon gleam across the waters. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

Verona, June 11th.

WE have had a delightful journey from Venice, which we quitted with great reluctance last Tuesday. Finding that we could scarcely reach Vicenza in one day if we stopped at Padua, we determined to sleep at Mestre, where we had left the carriage, and proceed on our journey the following morning. The voyage to this landing-place, a distance of five miles, afforded us little pleasure: we were turning our backs on a city which had interested us more than any other in Italy except Rome. After we had left Venice some time, our gondolier, who was very communicative, pointed out to us a small shrine to the Madonna fixed in one of the tall posts which serve as water-marks in the Lagunes, gravely informing us that this Virgin was particularly famous for her miracles; those who are threatened by danger on this side of Venice, and pray to her, are

sure to be preserved, but her jurisdiction seems to extend no further ; and when we inquired who watched over the safety of the boatmen on other seas, he replied that they trusted to the power and influence of the saint whose image they bore at their prow. This recalled to my mind what our boatman at Naples, a shrewd intelligent fellow, told us of the Madonnas and saints of that city ; the last he reckoned at two hundred thousand ; the former he said were numerous, and differed in their miraculous powers : this made me remind him that they were all images of one Madonna, which seemed to puzzle him ; he tried at first to explain that each one was distinct, separate in person as in power ; in confirmation of which, he said he should pray to no other Madonna when setting out on a fishing expedition than the ‘*Madonna delle Grazie*,’ the especial patron of the *pescatori*. How strange, yet natural, is this confusion of ideas in ignorant minds ! while the more educated Catholic may retain, amidst a multiplicity of images and attributes, the single idea of the one Virgin, and pray to her alone under various names, the ignorant and illiterate people are necessarily perplexed, like our poor boatman, and worship they know not whom.

After resting at Padua for an hour or two, and revisiting some of its churches, we again set for-

ward on our journey, and reached Vicenza soon after six o'clock. The rain, which descended in torrents as we approached that town, rendered it impossible for us to visit any of the buildings it contains ; as we drove along the streets, however, we caught glimpses of the beautiful palaces for which Vicenza is famous. The birthplace of Andrea Palladio, "the Rafael of architecture," this city is richly adorned with his works, and it was with much regret we found ourselves obliged to remain prisoners to the house.

Palladio was born in 1518, and was one of the few architects after the time of Augustus who studied from the antique ; he took it as his model, and laboured to introduce a new and better taste in public buildings, carefully avoiding the caprices and fancies of his age. He has been accused of adhering too rigidly to the ancients, without going back to the first principles of his science, and is said to have thus copied their defects as well as their excellences. Vicenza has, however, a just right to be proud of her citizen, and the world is largely indebted to him, not merely for the beautiful buildings he erected, but for the volumes he has left illustrative of his art.

We reached Verona early today, and the weather being propitious, we have greatly enjoyed a ramble through this ancient city, the more so after our

disappointment at Vicenza. Our journey has been delightful ; this

“ fruitful Lombardy,
The pleasant garden of great Italy,”

maintains the character it boasted in Shakspeare’s days ; it is fertile beyond compare : the wide and richly-cultivated plains, spreading out as far as the eye can reach, are planted with mulberry-trees and the broad-leaved catalpa ; the former wreathed with graceful garlands of vines, while the fields are covered with Indian corn, now just springing from the dark brown soil. These plains are bounded by the Alps on the north, whose lofty and rugged peaks with their interminable ranges we recognized this morning in the far distance ; I hailed the view with delight, and felt that in all our journeyings we had seen nothing so grand, so sublime as these mountains, placed by the hand of God as barriers between the nations of the earth.

The historical associations which belong to Verona extend through almost all the ages of antiquity, and its existence may be traced to several centuries previous to the Christian æra ; vestiges of the dominion of the Romans remain within its walls, in its beautiful amphitheatre and gates. Theodoric the Ostrogoth occupied it for a time, and we read that Charlemagne fixed on Verona as

the place of residence for his son Pepin. Under Otho the First it became an independent state, and during the middle ages was the seat of government of successive princes. Eccelino da Romano, of whom Ariosto says,

“Ezzelino, immanissimo tiranno,
Chè sia creduto figlio del demonio,”

held his court there ; and when he fell a victim to the rebellion which his atrocious deeds had aroused, Verona passed into the hands of the Scaligeri, or family of La Scala, whose name is too famous in history to be lightly passed over.

The first of this family who assumed power in Verona was Mastino the First ; he was elected Captain of the People. After his death, in 1268, his sons considerably increased the power and influence of the family ; and in 1311, Can Grande caused himself to be recognized by the Emperor of Germany as Lord of Verona. This man is spoken of as a brave general, a courteous prince, and a patron of letters and the arts. The splendour of his court is celebrated by Boccaccio, and we must regard it with reverence as the asylum of the exiled Dante, who alludes to Can Grande several times in the *Divina Commedia**.

* See particularly the *Inferno*, i. 103, and the *Paradiso*, xviii. 70, with the notes to Cary's translation.

Yet, in spite of his courtesy and hospitality, he was cruel and eager in the pursuit of war; peace was a word almost prohibited in his court. The lordship of Verona remained in the hands of the Scaligeri until 1387, when the Visconti, at that time dukes of Milan, took possession of the city. In the following century it was merged in the territories of the Venetians, under whose sway it was happy and prosperous. During Buonaparte's invasion, Verona was alternately occupied by the French and Austrian armies; and in the peace of 1814, the city and province were finally annexed to the latter crown.

Thus we may follow the history of Verona through a course of more than two thousand years; but from history let us turn for an instant to poetry—the poetry of fiction—which has also given to this city no little interest. Fair Verona, the scene of the tragic fate of Romeo and Juliet, is, like Venice, a spot held sacred by all true lovers of Shakspeare: every street seems as if it may have been the scene of the fierce encounters between the Montagues and Capulets; every palace and balcony recall the meetings of “that pair of star-crossed lovers;” the whole city is consecrated by the poet to their memory. The sight however of the broken sarcophagus, shown to us as the tomb of Juliet, speedily dispelled these

illusions. We found it in a kind of dirty coach-house, which had formerly been part of a Capuchin convent ; and far from shedding tears over it, as many are said to have done, with more of sentiment than I can pretend to, I turned away with a kind of painful disappointment. Shakspeare's characters live in our hearts, and we want not palpable objects to strengthen our conviction of the truth of their existence ; until I stood by Juliet's tomb, it had never occurred to me to question the events of her sad tale. The more we see of Italy, and the towns which Shakspeare has chosen as the scenes of his dramas, the more do I feel it difficult to believe that he never visited this lovely land ; the descriptions, the whole atmosphere in which he places his characters, are truly Italian.

The Amphitheatre of Verona is the most perfect and best-preserved ruin of its kind in Italy. It is much inferior in size to the Coliseum, but has suffered less from the hand of time and the ravages of man : its form remains entire, the upper range of arches only has given way, and the forty-five tiers of seats still exist ; the building is said to have contained above twenty-one thousand spectators. The time of its erection is uncertain, but it has been attributed to the age of Trajan. Goethe makes the following remarks in speaking of this Amphitheatre :

“ Upon entering it, and still more when I walked round the circuit, it appeared strange to me to witness so great a work, which yet, in a certain sense, was as nothing : it ought not to be viewed empty, but filled with spectators. In ancient times only could it have produced its full effect, when the people were more of a people than they are now ; for such an amphitheatre is peculiarly intended to inspire the multitude with a sense of their own greatness, to deceive them with this impression. The architect therefore studied to give the greatest simplicity possible to the building, and to leave the people to constitute its ornament. The people, thus brought together into a mass, must naturally have felt a self-astonishment : instead of, as usual, mingling in a crowd, each individual threading his way bewildered through the press—without order or regularity—*here* the multitude, that many-headed, many-minded, unstable animal, beheld itself collected into one noble whole, compacted into one mass, as a single body animated by one mind. The simplicity of the oval is agreeably obvious to every eye, and here every head served as a scale by which to judge of the immensity of the whole. On seeing it now empty, the eye has no standard for measurement, and cannot tell whether it is large or small.”

On entering it, we saw a modern theatre of wood occupying the centre of the arena, and great preparations were making for the performance of a comedy ; part of the old stone seats, enclosed by palisades, and reserved for those who chose to pay for admittance, were already occupied. In walking round the upper circle of the Amphitheatre, we looked down on the small stage, and saw the beginning of the performance, but it had not merit enough to detain us long.

Before returning to our hotel, we sought the tombs of the Scaligeri. These singular monuments stand in the open streets, surrounded by iron palisades. Forsyth thus describes them: "The tombs of the Scaliger princes are models of the most elegant gothic—light, open, spiry, full of statues caged in their fretted niches; yet slender as they seem, these tombs have stood entire for five hundred years in a public street, the frequent theatre of sedition"—

"Which made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeeming ornaments,
To wield old partisans, in hands as old."

Brescia, June 12th.

IN our journey hither we stopped to rest our horses and dine at Digenzano, on the shores of the Lago di Garda. I had heard little of this lake, and was surprised to find the scenery around it so grand. We walked from our inn, and seating ourselves on the trunks of some fallen trees, feasted our eyes on the exquisite prospect. The smooth surface of the lake was spread out far and wide before us, encompassed by lofty mountains and gently sloping hills; the country around is rich and luxuriant as a garden; the forests of oaks and chestnuts contrast beautifully with the orange and lemon groves, while olive-trees and limes, myr-

tles and laurels, grow down to the water's edge; here and there amidst their rich foliage peep forth castles and villas, and little villages are scattered about in every direction.

We arrived at Brescia in good time, and promised ourselves much pleasure in visiting the excavations that have been commenced within the last few years, and which have revealed many valuable Roman antiquities. A magnificent temple dedicated to Vespasian has been discovered, and a very fine bronze statue of a winged Victory. The commendations we had heard bestowed upon this work made us very anxious to see it: what was our mortification, on arriving at the gate of the temple after a long walk, to be told that, as it was a festa-day, the *custode* was "*a spasso*," and would not return for an hour! There was no place in which we could have whiled away the interval, and, too tired to think of retracing our steps at the time mentioned, with the probability of another disappointment, we were obliged to relinquish our wish. My subsequent perusal of a very interesting account of these excavations has much increased my regret in not having been able to see them. I am tempted to translate for you some passages from a book before me.

"In 1828," says Giuseppe Sacchi, "I visited the celebrated excavations in Brescia, which were

then but just begun : on my return, in 1834, I was astonished at the progress made ; in the place of the ruins that I had before seen, scattered about in confusion, the ancient temple stood before me, restored in its original beauty ; a noble staircase conducts to it. As you enter this venerable sanctuary, over which are inscribed the simple words ‘ Musco Patrio,’ three vast halls present themselves, of the same size and form as those anciently occupying the temple. In the first of these are placed all the Roman inscriptions which have been found in Brescia ; the second contains statues, busts, bas-reliefs, and many remains of the early ages of Christianity ; while in the third are preserved all the objects of interest which have been found during the progress of these excavations. In the midst stands the beautiful statue of the goddess Victory, to whom the temple is supposed to have been dedicated. The eye, enchanted by the sight of this noble work, can scarcely cease gazing on it. Beneath the temple there are remains of ancient houses, corridors, halls and staircases, with mosaic pavements and walls painted in fresco : it seemed a miniature Pompeii. This Museum is daily becoming richer ; all persons in the province of Brescia who possess antiquities, are, with true patriotic feeling, eager to place them in this public depository. Dr. Labus, the superin-

tendent, is preparing a work for the press, illustrating the discoveries already made ; and in order to meet the necessary expense of publication, the city of Brescia has given a large sum from its public treasury*.”

On our way back to the hotel, we entered several churches in the hope of seeing some pictures by Titian and Tintoretto ; but from the darkness of the buildings, we could scarcely distinguish either form or colour in the paintings which were pointed out to us.

* From the ‘Album Italiano,’ 1835. I have selected but a small portion of the information given in the original, of which I have here made an abridgement rather than a transcript.

LETTER XXI.

Milan, June 15th.

AFTER quitting Brescia we experienced much inconvenience from the heat of the weather. In the wide plains of Lombardy, exposed to a powerful sun, and shut in on the north by the lofty Alps, there are no fresh breezes to temper the noonday rays, and from about one o'clock the heat becomes so intense, that we suffered more from weariness in one short day's journey than from many a longer one in cooler weather. It was delightful to rest awhile at Palozzolo, a clean pleasant village situated on the banks of the Oglio, a rapid mountain-river. Of the beauty of the country through which we have lately travelled I can give you but a faint idea: the wide-spreading plains, luxuriant in vegetation, the clear bright streams watering every nook and corner, and the pretty villages scattered around, gave an air of joyousness to the scene which I have scarcely ever seen equalled.

The country-people are now engaged in stripping the leaves from the mulberry-trees: this operation is repeated twice every year, in the early summer and again in the autumn, when the trees have put forth a second crop. The leaves are used as food for the silkworms; the care and culture of these little animals forms one of the chief occupations in the north of Italy.

We reached Bergamo at about four o'clock: the inn at which we stopped was situated in the lower part of the town, which was divided into two parts, the upper town extending to the north and covering the side of a steep declivity. Being too tired to attempt to ascend this hill on foot, we engaged an open carriage, and proceeded to visit the churches. Between the upper and lower town, gardens and wide terrace-roads intervene; and before entering the former we passed beneath a fine gate, from which a beautiful road and promenade under an avenue of horse-chestnuts leads up the side of the hill to the town. The views of the adjacent country as we ascended became more extensive, and a rich and diversified prospect now presented itself to our view. Milan, at the distance of thirty miles, is visible, we were told, from this part of Bergamo; but a golden mist which shrouded the horizon, though it added loveliness to the landscape, prevented

our seeing the city, which we were approaching. From the fertile region stretched below us like a map, we turned to the glorious mountains now rising in our immediate neighbourhood; their forms were varied, lying in long low chains, above which towered the lofty and jagged summits of more distant heights; in parts these lines were broken, and one single mountain stood forth in isolated grandeur, while beyond these the view extended to new and interminable chains of hills, crowned by the snowy peaks of the Alps.

Entering the town, after taking a hasty glance at the cathedral, we drove to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, the ceiling of which is covered with gold, studded with bassi- and alti-rilievi; it is however more rich than beautiful. A chapel adjoins this building, which was built by General Colleone, as a mausoleum for himself and his family: he lies buried beneath a splendid marble monument, which is surmounted by a gilt equestrian statue of the warrior. He bequeathed money to have four masses said in this chapel daily, beside matins and vespers.

This church contains some curious mosaic in wood, or *tarsia di legno*. Of this art I had scarcely heard before my visit to Italy: we have lately seen many interesting specimens, and I will endeavour to give you a brief sketch of its history.

Tarsia*, or *lavoro alla Damaschina*, had been early brought to great perfection in the east, and was cultivated particularly at Damascus in metal ; gold, silver, bronze, copper and steel were inlaid with curious and beautiful devices. It had existed amongst the ancients, and many steel rings are preserved inlaid with figures and arabesque patterns. In Italy the art of working in mosaic had been known from the earliest times of Christianity ; the pavements and ceilings of the oldest Christian churches contain specimens of it, which, although rude enough in execution, are valuable as proofs of the existence of the art. Marble and stone were originally employed by the workers in mosaic, who afterwards used wood also, which, as a softer material, was worked with greater ease and rapidity. Vasari says that wood-mosaic, or *tarsia di legno*, was introduced into Italy about the time of Filippo Brunellesco, the celebrated Florentine architect ; it flourished most during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Count Cicognara remarks, "that Brunellesco, who was the first artist to understand and practise the rules of perspective, attracted the admiration and envy of all

* For the information respecting this art, I am indebted to my aunt, Mrs. Austin, who has most kindly placed at my disposal her manuscript notes respecting it.

by the exceeding beauty of his landscapes ; and the workers in tarsia are said to have learned from him, not the very ancient art of joining together bits of wood, but its application to a better purpose."

Tarsia di legno is composed of pieces of wood, either of the natural colours or artificially tinted ; these, after having been cut and fitted closely to each other, were fixed in a ground, generally of walnut. In the infancy of the art, black and white were only used ; and in the works of Benedetto and Giuliano Majano, artists contemporary with Brunellesco, we find no attempt to employ colours ; but Fra Giovanni da Verona, by steeping the wood in various dyes, was enabled to produce effects previously unknown. Works in tarsia now assumed more the appearance of paintings, and many executed by Fra Giovanni himself are unrivalled in beauty. This artist was justly celebrated : he visited Rome, where he was employed by Julius the Second, and his works are found scattered throughout Italy, although many of them have been lost and destroyed ; those which remain in the choir and sacristy of Santa Maria in Organis in Verona, are spoken of as exquisite and wonderful productions of art. The portrait of Fra Giovanni himself, by Morone, hangs in this sacristy. As the title *Fra* implies, Giovanni was a

monk—of the Olivetani order : monasteries were in that age sanctuaries of literature and the arts ; their tranquil seclusion was favourable to the cultivation of pursuits which required patient and accurate labour ; thus we find, while the time of many orders of monks, particularly the Benedictines, was devoted to the copying and illumination of manuscripts, others applied themselves in the quiet of their cells to the manufacture of wood-mosaic, and to them this art was indebted for its greatest progress. Among the names of the most celebrated *intarsiatori*, we find, besides Fra Giovanni da Verona, Fra Sebastiano da Rovigo, Fra Raffaello and Fra Damiano da Bergamo. Of the last mentioned Cicognara speaks as one of the most celebrated artists in tarsia, and perhaps the first of whom we have undoubted traces of well-earned fame. The choir of San' Domenico in Bologna, and that of the Dominicans in his own city, gained him singular renown. A contemporary of his says, that “ Fra Damiano, in perspective, landscapes, interiors, distances, and, what is more, in figures, does with wood all that Apelles did with colours and canvass.”

The Bergamese were peculiarly famous for their works in tarsia ; whole families, as those of Capo di Ferro and the Belli, devoted themselves to it. Milan too produced her Tarsian artists, and the

triumphal arch erected for the entry of Charles the Fifth into that city, formed entirely of wood, and adorned with carvings and devices, was the admiration of the artists of that period. The *intarsiatura* of Lorenzo Canozio, an artist who died in 1477, is highly commended; Vasari says that, although the church which contained his best works was destroyed by fire, yet his epitaph remains, in which it is said that “per quell’ opera è tolto al cielo*.”

In a former letter I think I mentioned the wood-mosaics of the cathedral at Pisa; these, with the specimens found in the following cities, are amongst the most beautiful remains of the art in Italy:—Florence cathedral; St. Mark’s and St. Francesco della Vigna, in Venice; St. Michele in Bosco, in Bologna; and those I have before mentioned in Bergamo and Verona. The choir of the cathedral at Malta contains some singularly fine works in tarsia; not only do they deserve admiration from the exquisite mechanical workmanship displayed in their execution, but from the grace of the figures and beauty of the designs. Some drawings from these made by a Maltese artist, and now in the possession of Mrs. Austin, have given me a juster sense of the perfection which the art of tarsia had attained, than any specimens I have seen in Italy.

* “For this work he is removed to Heaven.”

Lanzi observes that, not only were architectural and arabesque designs taken as the subjects for these wood-mosaics, but adds, that figures were introduced, and that artists imitated the different styles of the Italian schools of painting: thus he mentions the heads of the Apostles in the Certosa at Pavia, by Fra Damiano, as formed “sul gusto della scuola del Vinci.” The subjects of these works were often chosen with reference to utility rather than ornament: at a period when printed books were rare and geographical maps unknown, pictures of countries and plans of cities were often formed in this mosaic: had any of these been preserved, how valuable would they have been in the present day—how many curious facts relative to antiquity would have been transmitted to us, of which no vestige now remains! The art of Intarsiatura has been completely lost, and while we lament its extinction, we must yet confess that it was better adapted to the age in which it was so successfully cultivated, than to the present times; the peaceful seclusion of the cloister being eminently adapted for a pursuit which required the utmost patience and accuracy.

From Santa Maria we went to another church, Santa Grata, which is attached to a convent of nuns. As we entered, the sisters were singing vespers in the grated enclosure over the door; but

their voices were by no means melodious, and the monotony of the chant soon became wearisome to the ear. We made inquiries respecting this sisterhood, and requested in vain to be permitted to see the convent; no one is allowed to enter but on business, and the nuns receive the visits of their friends in the *parlatorio* behind a screen: even a mother is excluded from the private rooms, unless to see her child when dying.

Bergamo is still famous for its annual fair—an ancient institution, which is said to have existed as early as the tenth century. It is held in a large square building, having a spacious hall at each corner, and containing five hundred and ninety shops, in which every species of merchandize is sold. This fair forms one of the greatest emporiums of the silk-trade, and merchants from all countries flock hither to purchase silk, both raw and manufactured; although decreased in importance, it is still a famous mart of commerce.

In the principal piazza we saw the statue of Tasso, whose father, Bernardo, was a native of this city. Amidst all the misfortunes of Torquato, the inhabitants of Bergamo retained a lively interest in his fate; during his confinement in the hospital of St. Anne, the Bergamese addressed a petition to Alfonso, entreating that Tasso might be released; and when he was at length set free, his first visit

was paid to Bergamo, where he was received with acclamations of delight.

Milan, which we entered this morning, is approached on the eastern side by a long and noble avenue of trees, at the end of which are seen the tapering and graceful spires of the *Duomo*; a handsome gate stands at the entrance, and the first appearance of the town fills a stranger with admiration. The street along which we drove is very wide, and bordered on one side for a considerable distance by gardens, which are open to the public.

Before I write you any account of the city, let me spend this evening in giving you a brief sketch of the Milanese history, the events of which are closely connected with the fate of Europe during a period of great importance. Milan, as the object of contention during the sixteenth century between two of the greatest sovereigns in Europe, Charles the Fifth and Francis the First, may be said to have been the cause of those disastrous wars of which Italy was the theatre during that period. How often has this beautiful land been ravaged by the troops of Transalpine princes, who have made it their field of battle, whilst unhappy Italy has been in turns the prey of Germany, France and Spain !

The origin of the city is lost in the darkness of the early ages ; its foundation has been attributed to the

Etruscans. Certain it is, that as early as the fourth century Milan was a flourishing city. Its prosperity during this period has been commemorated by a contemporary writer* in the following terms : “Milan is an object of wonder ; the abundance of everything, the affluence and talents of its inhabitants, their good disposition, the singular beauty of the houses, its double circuit of walls, its circus, the delight of the people, the theatres, the imperial palace, the famous baths, the numerous porticos adorned with statues, the magnificence of everything, render Milan second only to Rome.”

Constantine, when he removed the seat of his empire to Byzantium, caused Italy to be divided into two parts ; Rome was made the metropolis of the south, and Milan that of the north. Upon the division of the empire, A.D. 365, between Valens and Valentinian, the latter, as Emperor of the West, fixed his court in this city, and it became a place of considerable power and importance. When the northern hordes entered Italy, Milan was an object of great attraction ; it was plundered, its inhabitants were cruelly treated, and its streets were soon deserted. The Lombard kings chose Pavia, the rich and powerful rival of Milan, as their residence, and the latter city remained neg-

* Ausonio.

lected and depopulated for many years. In 924 it again rose to importance, and during that century the first Diet for the election of a king of Italy was held there: the choice falling on Lothario, he was crowned at Milan in the church of Sant' Ambrogio. During the next century Milan became a free town, and was governed by its own municipal laws; but in 1158, torn by civil dissensions, the Milanese called in the aid of Frederic Barbarossa, who took possession of the city. The Guelph cities of Italy now aided the Milanese in their attempts to free themselves from the power of the emperor, and after many battles they succeeded in driving Frederic from Italy. At a Diet held at Constance in 1183, the famous treaty of peace was signed by the emperor, by which the rights of the cities of the north of Italy and those of the emperors of Germany, from whom they were held as fiefs of the crown, were clearly defined: "thus terminated," says Sismondi, "the first and most noble struggle which the nations of modern Europe have ever maintained against despotism."

From this period, until the end of the thirteenth century, Milan was continually the scene of internal strife: at length the ambitious family of the Visconti acquired a superiority which they little deserved, had virtue been the standard of merit. Matteo Visconti was appointed 'Captain of the

People' in 1295, who succeeded in establishing an almost absolute power in Milan. I will not pursue the fortunes of the cruel and sanguinary tyrants that succeeded him ; their history is a tissue of deeds from which the mind recoils with horror : let me pass to the period when, at the death of Filippo Maria Visconti, the family became extinct. It is necessary to state the numerous claims which were then made to the right of succession to the duchy of Milan, since from these sprang the fatal contentions to which I have before alluded.

On the union of Valentina Visconti with Louis duke of Orleans, it was stipulated in the marriage-contract, that, in default of male descendants in the Visconti family, the Milanese territory should fall to the duke of Orleans. When, therefore, in 1447, Filippo Maria died without leaving legitimate children, Charles duke of Orleans claimed the crown in right of his mother Valentina. The emperor asserted his, on the ground, that on the failure of any line in the hereditary succession to a fief, it necessarily reverted to the feudal lord. The Milanese, availing themselves of the commotion, determined to declare their city a republic ; but this state of things was of short duration. Francesco Sforza seized the reins of government, established himself firmly on the ducal throne, and transmitted it to his descendants, who occu-

pied it for many years. Ludovico Sforza, surnamed the Moor, was appointed Regent during the minority of his young nephew Galeazzo ; and in the reign of Charles the Eighth of France, and his invasion of Italy, Ludovico was permitted to retain possession of Milan ; but on the accession of Louis the Twelfth, duke of Orleans, he revived the claim which he had inherited in right of his grandmother, Valentina Visconti. Ludovico, abandoned by his allies, was unable to contend with Louis, and being taken prisoner was conveyed to France, where he died in captivity, having survived his disgrace ten years.

After this Milan remained under the French dominion until 1512, when Louis, being attacked by Ferdinand of Spain and Henry the Eighth of England, was compelled in self-defence to recall his troops from Italy, and Milan was seized by Maximilian Sforza, son of the Moor. Maximilian did not long retain the crown ; a formidable rival appeared in Francis the First, who, after many successful battles, was declared sovereign of Milan. Charles the Fifth in the meantime had been invited by Leo the Tenth to enter Italy and assist in driving the French from their possessions ; on this followed the fatal struggle between France and Germany, which devastated Italy for so long a period. Charles at length triumphed ; he quar-

tered his Spanish troops in Milan, and when their pay ran short, as was frequently the case, the citizens were subjected to every species of extortion and violence from the rapacious soldiers. Francesco Sforza, the second son of Ludovico, who had shut himself up in the castle of Milan, held out for nine months, but was at length, in 1526, compelled by hunger to surrender, and thus Milan fell under the Spanish rule. We have seen in Naples how the viceroys of Spain tyrannized over the people in the south, and similar acts of cruelty and oppression are recorded of them in Milanese history.

Milan remained subject to the Spanish crown from this period until the death of Charles the Second in 1700, which led to the famous war of succession between France and Austria*. At the termination of this war (which lasted above ten years) by the peace of Utrecht, the crown of Spain was definitively given to Philip of Anjou, and to Austria were granted most of the European possessions previously belonging to Spain, and amongst these Milan and the other states of the north of Italy.

* Charles dying without an heir, Louis the Fourteenth claimed the succession to the Spanish throne for his grandson, Philip of Anjou, whilst Leopold the First of Austria put in his claim for his son Charles, in right of the male line of descent.

Napoleon found Milan in possession of Austria ; by him it was invested and conquered in 1796, and at the peace of Campo Formio between France and Austria, Milan was acknowledged the capital of the Cisalpine republic. After his return from Egypt, Buonaparte, on his second invasion of Italy, caused himself to be proclaimed King of Italy, and it was at Milan that he assumed the iron crown of the ancient Lombard kings. After the peace of 1814, Milan was re-annexed to Austria, under whose dominion it has since remained. This city has been the scene of many of the infamous persecutions of the Piedmontese patriots, of which you have lately read in the “Memoirs of a Prisoner of State.”

Tomorrow we begin our survey of Milan. There seems less national character in this city than in any we have visited, and I feel as if we had already quitted Italy. Milan, like Turin, has more the air of a French than an Italian metropolis.

LETTER XXII.

Milan, June 17th.

THE morning after our arrival in this city, we went to the Cathedral. Notwithstanding all that I had heard and read of its magnificence, I was unprepared for the surprize I felt as we entered the Piazza and stood before this extraordinary edifice. The first impression is wonder at the ingenuity of man in raising so vast and intricate a structure ; as the eye wanders quickly over it, the senses are bewildered by an infinity of tapering spires and slender pinnacles ; you gaze longer, and innumerable statues start from every part, and the mind is lost amidst the superfluity of ornament. We have seen it since to greater advantage, on our return from a drive, in the soft calm light of a summer evening, its defects softened by distance or lost in the twilight ; the elegant form of the centre tower and its surrounding pinnacles, so graceful, so aerial, seeming to pierce the deep blue sky, gave an air of light and almost fantastic

beauty to the edifice. An Italian writer, in comparing the Duomo of Milan with St. Peter's, says, "L' una è una creazione della fantasia, l' altra della ragione*."

The history of the erection of this cathedral is singular, and accounts for much that is grotesque in its architecture. The foundations were laid as early as the year 1386, in compliance with the desire of Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti, who, amidst other means of acquiring fame and power, and perhaps in the hope of compensating for his crimes, determined to raise a church in honour of the Virgin which should surpass all others in grandeur of design and beauty of execution. At the jubilee of 1390, Galeazzo obtained an edict from Boniface the Eighth authorizing all the inhabitants of the Milanese territory to celebrate that festival in their own city, instead of at Rome; the large sums of money thus brought to the ecclesiastical coffers were applied to the building of the church, which had already made considerable progress under the munificent patronage of Visconti. From that period architects have been employed on the Duomo until the present day, their number amounting to one hundred and eighty-three, amongst whom we find the names of some cele-

* "The one is a creation of the fancy, the other of the reason."

brated artists—Brunelleschi, Bramante, Leonardo da Vinci and Giulio Romano. This cathedral has been called an epitome of the history of architecture during five centuries, and it would be curious to trace, in connexion with it, the progress of that art*.

The effect of the interior from the great western door is very fine : its simplicity of architecture contrasts strikingly with the elaborate ornaments of the exterior ; the vast and lofty nave stretches out before you in unbroken grandeur, and the repose which the quiet solemnity of its dim aisles afforded, as we entered them from the glare and heat of the noon-day, was truly delicious, and prepared our minds to receive the most favourable impressions from examining the interior of the building. The form is a Latin cross : the arches which span the aisles spring from light and slender columns, and the whole church has an air of sombre and tranquil beauty, which is rarely found in those of Italy.

We descended to a subterranean chapel beneath

* A. W. Schlegel alludes in a fine sonnet to the changes introduced by the later Italian architects in the plan of this cathedral. In a note he says that it was originally designed by a German artist, and that "the façade was altered in accordance to the taste of a later age : the building was left unfinished, and in 1805 one part of the roof was only covered with wood."

the altar, which contains the tomb of San' Carlo Borromeo ; it is lighted from the aisle above, and its decorations are splendid. These riches seem indeed ill to accord with the memory of one whose life was devoted to acts of mercy and benevolence, and whose days were spent in self-denial and humiliation. The chapel is octangular, and ornamented in the richest manner ; the pannels are of gold damask, and every other part is solid silver ; bassi-rilievi surround the chapel, representing the principal events in the life of San' Carlo, and it is worthy of remark that the workmanship of all these was executed gratuitously by the Milanese goldsmiths, in testimony of their deep veneration for the memory of the saint. The silver sarcophagus, forming the altar, contains a tomb of rock-crystal, in which is deposited the body ; it is little injured by time, and lies as it was first interred, in the archiepiscopal robes, which are covered with precious stones. We did not see it, as the tomb is opened only once a year, when the body is visible for twelve days. Mass is performed five times every day in this small chapel.

Leaving the church, we began the ascent to the roof, and were soon lost in the labyrinth of ornaments ; spires, statues, flying buttresses, pinnacles of gothic fretwork, seemed piled about in rich

confusion, and Forsyth's description of this cathedral recurred to my mind: "It has been," he says, "wonderfully contrived to bury millions of money in ornaments that are never to be seen. Whole quarries of marble have been manufactured here into statues, rilievos, niches and notches, and high sculpture has been squandered on objects which vanish individually in the mass. Were two or three thousand of those statues removed, the rest would regain their due importance, and the fabric itself become more important." Goethe makes a similar remark, which, although true perhaps in its application to this church, I cannot feel to be a just criticism on gothic architecture in general.

"All the northern church decorators," he says, "sought their greatness only in the multiplication of minute details; few understood how to give to these small forms any mutual relation, and thus rose such monstrous buildings as the Cathedral at Milan, where man has transplanted a marble mountain at an immense cost, and forced it into the meanest forms; even daily they torment the poor stones, to continue a work which can never be perfected, since the inventionless folly that planned it had also the power to give to the design an almost limitless execution."

The day was intensely hot; the sun's rays reflected from the leads, and the white marble which surrounded us on every side, made us glad to quit the roof, and retreat to the cool shelter of the aisles.

The Ambrosian Library, in which we have spent several hours this morning, contains much that is valuable and interesting; the reader of 'I Promessi Sposi' will remember the account given in the second volume, of its foundation by Cardinal Federigo Borromeo. I scarcely know a more exquisite piece of biography than is contained in the few pages devoted by Manzoni to the life of this great and good man.

“ The feather whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the life of that good man
Dropp'd from an angel's wing. With moisten'd eye
We read of faith and purest charity.
Oh, could we copy his mild virtues, then
What joy to live, what blessedness to die*!”

“ The virtues of Federigo Borromeo, rare in any age and country, were peculiarly so at the period in which he lived. His heart was pure and true, his mind clear and bright, his faculties vigorous; every energy was kept in full exercise, and all actively employed to the glory of God, in the promotion of the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of his fellow-creatures. His life was terminated by the plague: undaunted by the terrors which surrounded him, Federigo undertook the perilous duty of attending on the sick and dying;

* Wordsworth's Sonnet on Walton's Lives.

and after devoting his fortune and his time to acts of mercy, breathing words of peace and hope beside the bed of agony and death, he fell a victim to his arduous and self-imposed duty. His memory was blessed, and his name remained enshrined in the hearts of thousands of his grateful countrymen. The Milanese were anxious to see conferred on him the same honours which had been given to his cousin San' Carlo ; but the coffers of the noble family had been so exhausted by the expenses of the former ceremony, that the honour of canonization thus offered a second time was refused.

The Ambrosian Library is a monument of the zealous and well-directed philanthropy of Federigo; the manuscripts preserved here, as well as the collection of printed books, are very valuable ; the former amount in number to ten thousand, and of the latter there are sixty thousand volumes : the galleries of sculpture and painting also contain many rare and beautiful works of art. Amongst the manuscripts, we saw the copy of Virgil which had belonged to Petrarca, and in which is inscribed, in his own handwriting, the record of Laura's death. The manuscript is on vellum ; and Petrarca's friend Simon Memmi, the celebrated artist, illuminated the first leaf with miniatures, representing subjects taken from the *Æneid*. An-

other curious manuscript is a copy of the works of Josephus, written on papyrus, on both sides of the leaves ; this is supposed to be eleven hundred years old, and is in such an excellent state of preservation, that the only difficulty in deciphering it is said to arise from the innumerable abbreviations.

From the Library we went to the churches of Sant' Ambrogio and Sant' Alessandro ; the latter belonged formerly to a Benedictine monastery, which possessed immense wealth ; it contains a profusion of rich and costly materials, ill-assorted, and arranged with no kind of taste : the high altar is literally studded with gems. The Ciborio, or receptacle for the Host, is of lapis-lazuli, supported on slender columns, and in the centre of the door is a splendid blood-stone. From this magnificent display of wealth we were conducted to a small chapel, the walls of which are lined with human skulls and bones ; a miraculous Madonna forms the altar-piece, with an immense cross of skulls on each side. Many people were kneeling on the pavement, absorbed in prayer : in the presence of these signs of mortal frailty and decay, it was a scene well fitted to fill the imaginative mind with a sense of self-abasement and repentance.

The Church of St. Ambrose is one of the most ancient temples of Christian worship : it contains

the bones of its patron saint, one of the four doctors of the church, who died in the fourth century. The large marble pulpit from which the saint used to preach is carefully preserved in the principal aisle, and a huge brazen serpent, standing erect on a column of porphyry, is shown as that which Moses held up in the desert before the afflicted Israelites. The Milanese believe that this serpent will hiss when the end of the world shall come. You enter the building by one of those spacious porches or vestibules peculiar to Christian churches of the early ages, which have a venerable and imposing aspect, and seem, as Valery beautifully observes, "intended to separate the sanctuary from the tumult of the cities." In a former letter I told you of the courageous refusal given by St. Ambrose to the emperor Theodosius to enter this church, and how the indignant saint closed the gates on the imperial suppliant : these gates have been destroyed, but the porch which was the scene of this daring assertion of ecclesiastical power remains. The church itself contains, among many curious and ancient relics of early Christian art, a monument surrounded by bassi-relievi of the fourth or fifth century. There is an air of antiquity about this church which forbids all question as to the beauty of its architecture,

all doubt of the legends attached to its history : within its aisles you cannot be incredulous, and the perfect faith with which the sacristan related the marvels of the place, was fully responded to at the time by mine in listening to them.

On our way back to the hotel we entered Santa Maria delle Grazie. In the convent formerly attached to this church is the famous fresco of the Last Supper (*il Cenacolo*), by Leonardo da Vinci ; of this I shall not speak until we have seen it again, but proceed to tell you of the building itself. One of its small chapels contains a beautiful easel-picture of the Madonna by the same master. On entering it, I saw hung around every imaginable kind of garment, some considerably the worse for wear ; these are votive offerings of the poor, who, having been restored to health, as they believe by the intercession of this Virgin, and having no money to purchase silver hearts or the other usual offerings, have deprived themselves of some article of dress, and presented it to the Madonna. One little angel, projecting from the wall, was overwhelmed with the weight of gowns, petticoats, coats and trowsers ; and on a long row of pegs I saw handsome lace and muslin pelerines, belts and buckles, gloves, ribbons, cravats, stockings, etc. When I asked of what use these were to

the Madonna, I was told that from time to time they are sold, and the money is applied to the purchase of oil for the lamps suspended before the picture.

We visited many other churches—S. Satiro, S. Fedele, S. Celso and S. Nazzaro. To the latter is attached a circular temple, around which are placed the monuments of the noble family of the Trivulzii; they are sunk in niches in the wall, and raised high above the ground. One of them, erected to the memory of a warrior who had distinguished himself by his active spirit in the Milanese wars, bears the following epitaph:

JACOPUS TRIULTII,
JOANNIS FILIUS,
QUI NUNQUAM QUIEVIT, QUIESCIT.
TACE!

We are just returned from an evening drive on the Corso, a delightful promenade, where all Milan repairs after sunset to enjoy the cool air. This Corso is a wide terrace, within the walls of the city, commanding on one side the palace and gardens of the Viceroy, and on the other overlooking the Lazzaretto; the views it affords of the distant mountains are very beautiful. We have nowhere in Italy seen so many splendid and well-appointed equipages, or such fine horses as were

assembled on this public drive. Many of the ladies were without bonnets or caps, some sitting in open carriages conversing with their friends, and the sound of French and English was much more frequently heard than of Italian. It was a gay and brilliant sight, and we remained abroad until late.

LETTER XXIII.

Milan, June 19th.

WE have this morning been to the Palazzo Brera, a magnificent building, now employed as the Academy of Arts and Science in Milan, but originally a college belonging to the Jesuits. The land on which it is situated was presented by San' Carlo Borromeo in 1570 to that fraternity, who, sparing no expense, erected a structure, which, from the vastness of its plan and the beauty of its design, reflected great credit on their order. When completed, it was dedicated to the instruction of youth, and lectures were delivered on theology, languages, science, and various other branches of knowledge. When, in 1773, the order was suppressed in Milan, this noble palace, retaining its character of a public institution, was still devoted to the purposes of science and art. The library of the Jesuits, which consisted almost entirely of valuable theological works, was considerably enlarged, and now contains more than.

two hundred thousand volumes. It was much indebted to the liberality of the Empress Maria Theresa, who added to it the rare collection of the great physician and naturalist Albert Haller. This splendid gift was followed by many others of great value ; and the library, which occupies three spacious halls or galleries, now ranks amongst the first in Europe. The Brera likewise possesses an astronomical observatory, to which is attached a separate and appropriate library, a botanical garden, schools for the study of belles lettres and the fine arts, beside a fine collection of paintings.

To the rooms which contain the latter we chiefly confined our attention, and found amongst them many choice specimens of art. Here is one of the finest Guidos I have seen, Paul visiting Peter in prison ; and a Guercino, which is considered his masterpiece, Hagar and Ishmael driven forth by Abraham. The ‘Sposalizio della Vergine’, by Rafael, is also in this gallery ; this must be the painting which Lanzi mentions with such high praise as the first-fruits of his second style : “ In this group we look in vain for that scantiness of drapery, that dryness and mannerism, and that affectation of beauty, which in the works of Perugino sometimes degenerate into the insipid : a vivifying spirit pervades every gesture, every

countenance.....The bride and bridegroom have a degree of beauty which Rafael scarcely ever surpassed, even in his riper years : the Virgin, more especially, is a model of angelic beauty....Amidst all the lovely forms around her she appears triumphant, and that not from the adventitious ornaments of art, but from her own native charms. Dignity, beauty, modesty and grace, all conspire to ravish the spectator.....In the labours of his maturer years, other artists, whose works he studied, may claim a share ; but in these, his earlier efforts, he was supported solely by the vigour of his own innate powers." It is this feeling, this fine sense of beauty, which gives so deep an interest to the early works of Rafael : in his first designs there is much of the hardness and formality of the school in which he studied, but even here we may trace the elements of that grace which was so peculiar to himself, and which was afterwards gloriously developed. This was nature's endowment, and when it was matured and cultivated by study, and the acquirement of profound science in his art, the result was three successive changes in his style, varying in character, but all full of this beautiful feeling. He was undoubtedly much indebted for the grandeur of his later works to the study of Michael Angelo,

but what he borrowed he made his own ; his mind was of that peculiar temperament which appropriated beauty wherever he found it : he was no mere copyist, but an imitator in the best sense of the word : “like the bee in its flight, he extracted the sweet wherever he went, until his mind became a dwelling-place for all that was beautiful, receiving, as it were, by instinct what was congenial to itself, and rejecting everything else almost as unconsciously as if it was not there*.”

Let us now turn to the Milanese school of art. Specimens of that rude and uncouth style termed Lombard still exist in Milan and the north of Italy, but they are so far removed from the beautiful as to merit attention merely as curiosities. Birds, beasts and reptiles, with monsters of every form, combined in strange and unnatural attitudes, are the frequent subjects of these early works. The artists, apparently aiming only at the grotesque, succeeded in rendering the human form so monstrous as scarcely to be recognised ; small bodies with giant heads, some figures all legs, others all arms, outrage nature, and therefore good taste. Such abortions may be seen in a frieze over the door of San’ Celso, and are frequently found in the capitals of columns in Milan, Pavia,

* Notes on Rogers’s Italy.

and other Lombard cities. From these, which were works of the tenth century, we may pass at once to the period when Leonardo da Vinci opened a new æra in art. Lanzi mentions, it is true, some remains of art belonging to the intermediate ages, and speaks of several painters contemporary with, or even precursors of, Giotto; to these he subjoins many other names unknown to fame. Vincenzio Foppa, who lived in 1450, is designated by him the founder of the Milanese school; Leonardo da Vinci, however, was born in 1452, and as his life marks the brightest period in Milanese art, I pass over what is remote and less interesting.

Leonardo was born at Vinci, in the Val d' Arno; he is generally classed as a painter of the Florentine school, but as Milan was the theatre of his brilliant success, and it is here that his finest work is preserved, I have deferred until this time giving you a sketch of his history. Few men have been endowed by nature with such varied and brilliant talents, refined sensibility, and such beauty of face and figure as the youthful Leonardo, and fewer still have cultivated the natural advantages to the extent he did. No power, no talent which Heaven had bestowed upon him was allowed to be idle, but every faculty was called into life and energy. Fuseli describes him in his usual

forcible manner, compressing his whole character into a few words. "Leonardo da Vinci," he says, "broke forth with a splendour which eclipsed all his predecessors: made up of all the elements of genius, favoured by form, education and circumstances, all eye, all ear, all grasp—painter, poet, sculptor, architect, anatomist, engineer, chemist, mechanist, musician, philosopher, and sometimes empiric—he laid hold of every beauty in the enchanted circle; but without exclusive attachment to one, dismissed each in her turn."

From infancy Leonardo manifested a strong love for art, and his father, perceiving this, showed some of his sketches to Andrea Verocchio, who, full of wonder at the talent they displayed, entreated Ser Piero to place his son under his care. Verocchio, whose fame as an artist stood high at that time, watched with anxious interest the unfolding of his young pupil's mind, and his care was soon richly rewarded. Not content with the study of painting and design, Leonardo laboured successfully to obtain a thorough knowledge of all the sciences connected with his favourite pursuit. I must confine my notice to his career as an artist, for in the limits of a letter I should in vain attempt to follow his genius through its bold and at times whimsical flights, or trace the inventions which sprang from his fertile brain.

The wonderful foreshortening displayed in some of Leonardo's Cartoons evince his knowledge of anatomy and perspective, and to correctness of design he added a truth and power of expression unknown before his time. He frequented places of public assembly of every description, in order to make himself familiar with all the varying movements of the body and expressions of the countenance. In his 'Treatise on Painting,' he thus recommends artists to study the composition of groups for historical pictures: "Let it be your delight to observe and note in your daily walks the different actions of men when they are talking or quarrelling, when they laugh and when they fight; attend to their positions, and to those of the spectators. Be quick in sketching these with slight strokes in your pocket-book, which should always be about you. When it is full, take another, for these things are not to be rubbed out, but kept with the greatest care; preserve these sketches as your assistants and masters." Following himself the advice he gave others, his sketch-book was his constant companion. The result of this careful labour is seen in the truth of his pictures: no painter of the Italian schools ever devoted himself with more assiduity to the details of art: his portraits are so highly finished, that

every vein, every pore of the skin, may be traced ; he was never weary of copying nature, and often spent years in the completion of a picture ; yet with all this scrupulous attention to the minutiae of painting, his style never degenerated into feebleness ; he knew how to unite grandeur with exquisite finish. Few did more for the furtherance of the true principles of art than Leonardo da Vinci.

In 1482 he was invited by Ludovico Sforza to Milan, where he executed his greatest work, the 'Last Supper.' Soon after his arrival in this city, he was appointed to found and superintend an Academy of Art ; and it is supposed to have been for the use of his scholars that he composed his 'Treatise on Painting,' which is still held in high estimation. This school was famous for its chiaro-oscuro, or the correct distribution and management of lights and shadows in a picture. Leonardo himself says, "The first object of a painter is to make a simple plain surface appear like a rilievo ; he who excels in this branch of the art of painting deserves the greatest praise : " again, he calls shadows the glory of the art. Lanzi says, "He taught his pupils to regard light as a gem, and to shed it over only those parts of their pictures where it would produce the greatest effect."

So much has been said and written of the fa-

mous Cenacolo, or ‘Last Supper,’ and the engravings of it have rendered it so familiar to us, that I can but repeat the oft-told tale of its former beauty and its present decay. How lamentable are the circumstances which brought this fine painting to ruin ! Leonardo, in his love of new theories, unhappily practised on it experiments in compounding and mixing colours ; he is said to have used distilled oils, and to have begun his work on a wall not properly prepared ; the paint in consequence soon began to peel off, and as early as 1642 a writer on art speaks of this wonderful picture as a wreck, in which it was scarcely possible to distinguish the story. Still we might have retained some idea of what the painting originally was, but for the efforts made by bungling artists to restore it : at several periods it has fallen under the merciless brush of these destroyers ; the temerity of one man, Belotti, led him, under the pretence of retouching some parts, to paint the whole. Of the original therefore, little trace remains ; and this noble work, which Lanzi calls “a compendium not only of all that Leonardo taught in his works, but of all that he comprised within the compass of his studies,” is irretrievably lost to the world.

The ‘Last Supper’ was painted in the refectory of the Dominican convent attached to Santa Maria

delle Grazie. At the time that Milan was in the possession of Napoleon, this convent was converted into barracks, and as the refectory became a stable for the cavalry horses, the mutilated painting doubtless received still further injury.

Many anecdotes are related of Leonardo da Vinci during the progress of his picture ; how far they are founded on fact I cannot tell. It is said that the head of our Saviour was left unfinished ; the artist having invested the countenance of the disciple John with a beauty almost divine, shrank perhaps from portraying the mingled emotions of him whose heart was full of grief, knowing as he did that in the band of his beloved disciples there was one who had proved a traitor. The moment chosen by the artist is that in which Christ has just uttered the heart-searching words, " One of you shall betray me !" To portray the varied expression which this appeal would call forth on the countenances of the disciples, was a task requiring all that knowledge of the hidden sources of feeling which Leonardo possessed ; the astonishment and horror in which all shared, would receive from the peculiar temperament of each one its distinctive character : in John intense anguish would prevail, while Peter's impetuous spirit would shine forth in restless indignation ; fear, doubt, inquiry, conscious innocence and self-accusing guilt would

all be seen, marking the effect of the Saviour's words. Leonardo said that he had meditated for two whole years how best to portray on a human face the workings of the perfidious heart of Judas ; it is believed that he took for his model the Prior of the convent, his bitter and malicious enemy.

On the fall of his patron, Ludovico Sforza, Da Vinci visited Florence, where he remained from 1503 to 1507 ; he was tempted to this step by the patronage afforded to art in that city by the Medici. He executed there many works, and was appointed by the Signoria to paint one side of their council-chamber in the Palazzo Vecchio ; while to Michael Angelo, then a young man, was consigned another compartment of the same room. The artists were desired to take as their subjects scenes from Florentine history, representing the victories of the republic. There is a difference of opinion respecting the battles which they selected, but it is generally supposed that Michael Angelo chose the famous Battle of Pisa*. This point, however, is of less importance than the manner in which the subjects were treated : in this view the comparison of the two great rival works is of high interest, and I wish to draw your attention to it.

* Benvenuto Cellini gives reasons for discrediting the account of Vasari.

Michael Angelo selected a moment of action which gave the utmost scope for a display of his peculiar power: the Florentines are surprised by their enemies whilst bathing in a river, fatigued, exhausted, and disarmed. On a sudden the trumpet sounds the alarm, every action is arrested, lassitude changes on the instant into the most excited action, and every figure is in motion. It is easy to imagine how grand a subject this was for Michael Angelo to treat; where the most sudden and violent impulses of the mind are represented through the hurried actions of the body, requiring every possible variety and movement of posture*. The subject of Leonardo's Cartoon was also well chosen to display his powers of composition: it represents the last and doubtful moments of victory, where the struggle is the fiercest; he has grouped several horsemen around a standard, for which they are fighting with desperation; and the horses even (for which Leonardo was particularly famous†) are animated by all the fierce spirit of the battle.

These two great works attracted artists from all

* A copy of the principal group, painted in oils, is in the possession of the Earl of Leicester, at Holkham.

† Leonardo constructed a gigantic bronze horse for Ludovico Sforza, for which he made studies for a long time previous. This work was broken to pieces in its erection.

parts, whose study and admiration of them exercised a considerable influence on the state of art. Unhappily this was accompanied by the evil effect of jealous rivalry : parties were formed, who, instead of acknowledging the undeniable merits of both, studied only to exalt their favourite artist by depreciating his rival ; thus a noble spirit of emulation was succeeded by one of mean rivalry, which terminated by these two great artists becoming open enemies. We may conceive, under these circumstances, how great must have been the mortification of Leonardo to see, after he had made some progress in the work, that his colours were beginning to peel off the wall. Neither of these celebrated pictures now exist, but fragments of the Cartoons show their grandeur of design*.

Rafael is said about this time to have gone to Florence, attracted by the fame of the veteran Leonardo and the youthful Buonarrotti. From his study of the works of the latter he acquired new vigour and strength in the art of design, while in those of Da Vinci was first presented to his eyes that grace and truth of expression with which his own genius had such affinity.

In 1513 Leonardo visited Rome for the first time ; but having been offended by the interference of the Pope, Leo the Tenth, respecting his mode of

* Fuseli has given an admirable analysis of them.

painting, and irritated by a renewal of the jealousies between himself and Michael Angelo, at that time residing in Rome, he withdrew from the city, and shortly after accepted the invitation of Francis the First to reside at his court. That monarch, on visiting Milan in 1515, was so delighted with the works of Leonardo, that he wished to have transported the 'Last Supper' to Paris; but failing in an attempt to remove it from the wall on which it had been painted, Francis resolved to attach Leonardo to his suite. The artist, now past the prime of life, and unable to compete with the rivalry existing amongst the artists of that day, was easily induced to exchange his anxious life for one of tranquillity; he seems entirely to have thrown aside his pencil, but remained the guest of the French king until his death, which took place in 1519.

Amongst the scholars of Da Vinci, none followed so closely in his steps as Bernardino Luini; in many of his paintings he approaches so nearly to the perfection of his master, that the most practised eye can scarcely detect the difference in style; in proof of this let me mention an Herodias with John the Baptist's head, in the Tribune at Florence, about which critics differ, although it is, I believe, generally ascribed to Luini.

We may pass over the other artists of this

school: Gaudenzio Ferrari is mentioned by Lanzi as displaying in his paintings, in addition to a sprightliness and vivacity of colouring, “a most portentous fertility of fancy,” in which he was scarcely exceeded by Giulio Romano. The Procaccini distinguished themselves by their talent for art, and, under the patronage of the Borromeo family, rose to high estimation.

Milan, June 20th.

SINCE our arrival in Milan, we have seen a curious specimen of *niello*, which, from the connexion of this art with the invention of engraving, interested me greatly. Engraving on wood was known long before that on copper, and its origin is involved in mystery. As early as 1441 we hear of stamped playing-cards being used in Venice, and they are supposed to have been known long before that period. The Germans, who were the inventors of printing, seem also to have first employed woodcuts as illustrations for books; this art was prosecuted in Germany by Albert Durer, while Mecherino, or Beccafiume of Siena, and some other artists of the same period, pursued it with almost equal success in Italy. The origin of engraving on copper is ascribed by Vasari to Maso Finiguerra, a celebrated *niellatore* of the fifteenth century; but before telling you how he arrived at this

invention, I will describe the art from which it arose.

Niello, or the inlaying of metals, was employed in very early times, and seems to be the same as the *marqueterie* of the French, and the eastern *lavoro damaschino*, which I have before mentioned. The process by which the beautiful works we have lately seen were executed, was as follows. The subject being cut out with a chisel in a plate of silver, the interstices were filled with a mixture of silver and lead, called, from its dark colour, *nigellum*, whence the Italian word *niello* was derived. The contrast of this dark substance with the shining whiteness of the ground, produced the effect of a beautiful rilievo. It was chiefly used for tables, cabinets, the covers of missals, and sometimes for the hilts of swords. Maso Finiguerra was in the habit of taking an impression of his works to prove them, before he filled the cavities with niello; this he effected by pressing the frame thus prepared for its reception on soft earth; a reversed copy was of course given, as the parts before sunk now stood out in relief; he then covered it with liquid sulphur and lamp-black, and another impression was taken. He also took proofs of his works by colouring them over with a similar preparation, and then placing moistened paper on this, passing a smooth round

roller over it, which gave to the impressions, Vasari says, "not only the appearance of being stamped, but made them look as if designed with the pen." Only two or three of Finiguerra's proofs remain, but many still exist of that period. The transition from this to the next step in the art of engraving was an easy one. Copper was substituted for the more expensive material which had led to the discovery, and the attention of artists was now turned to the new effect to be produced, and greater accuracy and delicacy were introduced into the execution of the frames intended solely for engravings. Amongst some of the earliest engravers of Italy, I may mention the names of Marcantonio, Mantegna, Antonio Pollaiuolo, Nicoletto da Modena, Giovanni Antonio, and Francesco Francia.

In our rambles this morning we have visited the immense Piazza d'Armi, in which is situated the triumphal arch designed and partly erected by Napoleon, as the termination of the Route of the Semplon. It is a noble structure, although the original design has been altered: the bassi-rilievi of Napoleon's principal battles, which were to have adorned its sides, have given place to others, in which the Austrians appear as conquerors; and instead of the bronze statue of Napoleon, modeled by Canova, and intended to have crowned its summit, standing in a chariot drawn by six mag-

nificent bronze horses, a figure of the emperor Francis the First is to be substituted. Another monument, showing Buonaparte's wish to conciliate the people whom he conquered, remains in Milan, which, as the capital of the Cisalpine republic, he desired to adorn and enrich. This is the Amphitheatre, also situated in the Piazza d' Armi; it is of large dimensions, and was intended for the revival of games and sports, in imitation of those of the ancients. This modern arena became, during the reign of Buonaparte, the scene of chariot, horse, and foot races; in the former, chariots were used built in the form of the old Bigæ. Naumachiæ even were held here, the Amphitheatre was flooded, and mock sea-fights took place. I have somewhere read that in winter it is inundated with water, which freezes, and the Italians are seen emulating the nations of the north in the delightful exercise of skating. Now farewell! tomorrow we leave Milan.

LETTER XXIV.

Como, June 21st.

WE quitted Milan this morning, and soon reached Monza, where we halted, in the hope of seeing the ancient iron crown of the Lombard kings, which is preserved in the cathedral of that town. Finding that we should have provided ourselves with an order from Milan, we sent to the palace to request the necessary permission to see the treasure, which was instantly granted. It however arrived too late; the priests had begun to celebrate mass at the high altar, beneath which the crown is kept, and to see it was impossible until the service should be concluded. The carriage was ready, and being unable to wait another hour, we departed without effecting our desire.

This crown is formed externally of precious stones, but derives its chief value from a tradition of its being lined with the iron of the nails with which our Saviour was crucified. It originally be-

longed to the kingdom of Lombardy, and Charlemagne was solemnly invested with it when he conquered that country : the emperors of Austria to this day receive it from the hand of the Archbishop of Milan on their accession to the throne. Buonaparte placed it on his own head, saying that it was given him by God himself, and man should not deprive him of it.

The road from Monza to Como passes through a beautiful and varied country ; we first drove along narrow lanes, bordered with acacias, which, meeting overhead, formed a pleasant shelter from the heat of the noonday sun, while the grassy banks on either side were gay with flowers. Quitting these lanes, we entered upon an open tract of country ; here fields of Indian corn were spread around us, or barley already ripe for harvest, and sometimes flax, with its delicate and wavy flower. On approaching Como, the hills, covered with noble Spanish chestnuts, seemed to close around us ; we watched in vain to catch a glimpse of the lake, until we stopped at the door of the inn.

Before dinner we walked to the Duomo, reserving our excursion on the lake for the evening. This ancient edifice was begun in 1396, by the architect Lorenzo degli Spazii ; the architecture is by some called gothic, but it differs materially from the rich and elegant style to which we apply

that name. The account of this building given by an Italian writer* whose work is before me, appears far more true : “ Innalzata durante il passaggio di molte generazioni, raccoglie in sè la varietà degli stili architettonici, dal greco-barbaro all’ arabo-tedesco, e dall’ elegante Bramantesco al Borrominesco disgustevole.” The same writer goes on to say, that the Piazza del Duomo at Como presents a true epitome of the elements which were the strength of the middle ages—the church, the feudal power, and the municipal power of cities ; here we see, in juxtaposition, the cathedral, the lordly tower, and the palace, from the portico of which the magistrates conferred with the people. The tower is now used as the belfry—“ donde spaventoso piombava sulla città un suono di guerra e di all’ arme, or piove quel solenne che ne misura il tempo ed invita alla preghiera, alla festività, al suffragio.”

Having quickly despatched our dinner, we were glad to embark on the lake ; our little boat cut its way bravely through the clear blue waters, and as we turned a corner and lost sight of the town, the beauty of the lake of Como first opened on our view. The hills which encompass it rise perpendicularly from the water’s edge ; here and there, on a terrace

* Cesare Cantù.

cut in their sides, a pretty villa is seated, sometimes seeming built into the water, and the gardens hanging in terraces above are rich in beautiful flowers. Higher upon the steep rocks are groves of chestnut, and a line traced midway marks the footpath beyond, leading to one of those clusters of white cottages which indicate the mountain villages. No carriage-road passes along the shores of this lake, and the villas are accessible only by water or on foot. The scenery at the further end of the lake is much more grand and wild in its features, but we had not time to penetrate into the recesses of the mountains, and after enjoying our little excursion we returned to the town.

Pliny the Younger was a native of Como, and had several villas on the shores of the lake; of these he frequently speaks in his epistles, and often when engaged in the active duties of a city life he sighed for the retirement of these beautiful retreats. He thus writes to a friend, after describing the country pleasures he imagines him to be enjoying: "Far be it that I should envy you, but I must confess I greatly regret that I also cannot partake of them—a happiness I long for as earnestly as a man in fever for drink to allay his thirst, or for baths and fountains to assuage his heat." A statue of Pliny stands in the front of the cathedral.

Domo d'Ossola, June 23rd.

WE left Como yesterday, and stopped at noon to rest our horses at Varese, a town most picturesquely situated: while the dinner was being prepared, we walked to a villa in the neighbourhood, from the terrace of which we were promised "*una veduta magnifica.*" Richly were we rewarded for a hot and toilsome walk to the brow of the hill on which the villa stands, and sitting down in front of the house we gazed in speechless delight on the prospect around. On one side the eye rested on the calm bright waters of the lake of Varese beneath us, and we distinguished in the distance those of Lago Maggiore and Ternati. The day was one to show mountain scenery to perfection, bright gleams at times lighting everything into beauty, at others dark shadows flitting rapidly over the landscape; at one moment the lofty mountains were shrouded from view behind a veil of clouds, and looking again we beheld their snowy summits glittering brilliantly amidst the wreaths of mist that lay beneath. Such was the distant view, while nearer to us hills of less magnitude were clothed with woods; amongst these we discerned one visited by many pilgrim feet, crowned by the church of La Madonna del Soccorso, and amidst the groves were visible the sta-

tions or shrines which are placed at intervals on the ascent.

We returned to the inn, and soon proceeded on our journey. Today we have quitted the cross-roads by which we travelled to Como, and have joined the grand route of the Semplon. At Sesto Calende we first came to the Lago Maggiore, leaving the Austrian dominions and once more entering Sardinia. We slept at Arona, a poor town on the banks of the lake, the scenery of which only begins here to be interesting. Arona boasts of being the birthplace of Carlo Borromeo : upon a hill in the neighbourhood stands a colossal statue of this great and good man, erected by his nephew, Cardinal Federigo, of whom I have already spoken. It is of a stupendous size, the figure being visible from almost every part of the lake : twelve persons, it is said, can sit with ease in the head, one in the nose, and two in the book which he holds under his arm. We were afraid to ascend the perpendicular ladder, by which we should have reached the top of the pedestal.

Large masses of dark clouds, whose approach we had not heeded, now came rolling over from the Alps, and before we had descended the hill the storm overtook us ; the rain fell in torrents, and we were glad to seek shelter in a limekiln. From this spot we could watch the progress of

the tempest—a glorious sight ! the wind swept in gusts across the lake, stirring its surface into fury : the thunder seemed incessant, for while one loud peal broke with an awful crash over our heads, the long-sustained reverberations of the preceding clap were sounding in the distant mountains. The lightning flashed in lurid gleams across the sky, dancing upon the waters, or lighting up the hills beyond the lake with supernatural brightness.

After a fatiguing but most delightful day, we have reached Domo d' Ossola, and are now in the very heart of the mountains. Alps on Alps rise before, behind and around us, and amongst these stand forth the snow-covered peaks of the Semplon, the giant-mountain we are to cross tomorrow. Let me however retrace our steps, and tell you of Isola Bella and Isola Madre, those gems of the Lago Maggiore. We quitted Arona at six o'clock this morning, having a long journey before us, and much to see on our way. Leaving the carriage at Belgirata, about a league distant from Arona, with directions that it should meet us at Baveno, we embarked in a boat for Isola Bella, which, with its terraces and towers, we had long seen rising from out the bosom of the waters.

This island is entirely artificial ; the greater part is supported on arches, and contains, besides the

villa belonging to the Borromean family, many cottages, including a population of two hundred persons. From the formal appearance which it presents from the water, and knowing how entirely it is indebted for its existence to art, I was scarcely prepared to find it so worthy of its name ; it is indeed not only *bella*, but *bellissima* ; no climate, no soil can be more favourable to the cultivation of flowers. The head-gardener, our guide around the grounds, seemed an intelligent and sensible person ; under his care, the beauty of English taste in gardening is united with the luxuriance of Italian vegetation. Flowers and shrubs from tropical regions flourish and blossom here in the open air ; orange and lemon trees grow in profusion, sometimes as standards, at others covering the walls or led over trellis-work they formed a shade above our heads. It was a spot to bring to recollection the beautiful opening scene in Goethe's 'Tasso', where he introduces the two Leonoras :—

“ Here a new world of joy surrounds our path :
With spreading shade, the trees and evergreens
Burst into gladdening life : the fountain's play
Sheds sweet refreshment upon all around : the boughs
Move quivering in the gentle breeze of morn,
And flowers, uprising from their beds, with eyes
Of infant sweetness, seem to smile on us.
The gardener now unroofs the winter-house,
And gives the citrons to the balmy air.

The blue expanse of heaven rests overhead ;
Whilst the far mountains, on the horizon's verge,
Shake off their wintry coverlet of snows."

The Villa is one of the pleasantest I have seen in Italy : the rooms are spacious, and many of them hung with pictures, every window offering a new and lovely prospect of the beautiful and placid lake, on which the island seems to float. The glorious mountains which surround it, the villages scattered on the shore, and the boats with their pretty sails speckling the surface of the lake, all combined to fix the scene indelibly on my memory.

The grottos of Isola Bella, eight in number, are hollowed in the rock on which the whole structure of the island was originally raised ; the walls are encrusted with petrifications and fossils, and the floor is of mosaic-work formed of pebbles ; the ornaments are all in good taste. In the summer-time, when the family reside in the Villa, they occupy these rooms, tempted by their coolness and shade. The windows open on to balconies which overhang the lake, and fish of various kinds sport about in the clear water beneath. Some of the upper chambers contain many landscapes by Antonio Tempesta, who, after having murdered his wife, is said to have taken refuge on this island, and employed himself in painting these pictures :

the subjects are principally storms by sea and land, nature torn by the convulsion of the elements. It was from his admirable delineation of these scenes that he was called *Tempesta*.

From *Isola Bella* we rowed to *Isola Madre*, which is less artificial and therefore more beautiful. A thick shady wood surrounds the island, and green slopes and flower-beds occupy the centre. The walks cut through the wood are charming, and at one point we saw four villages on the shore, each seeming to terminate a long vista of trees. To those who enter Italy by the pass of the *Sempron*, these islands, with their groves of oranges and lemons, pomegranates and oriental shrubs, must seem like a terrestrial paradise; to us they had a still deeper charm, as the last smile of nature under an Italian sky. Italy is now rapidly receding from us; another day, and her sunny plains, her lovely sky and glorious cities will all be left behind, and the pleasure we should otherwise have experienced in wandering amidst the shady recesses of the *Borromean* islands is clouded by the thought that we are so soon to leave them. As I looked at the tall aloes, now preparing to put forth their blossoms, these lines recurred to my mind, and I felt how applicable they were to the recollections of my Italian life :

“ Oh ! they were light and brilliant hours,
Which, like the aloe's lingering flowers,
May blossom to the eye of man
But once in all his weary span.”

The tale of the aloe blossoming but once in a hundred years is fabulous, but the idea, so long entertained as true, has been made the subject of a beautiful metaphor.

Landing at Baveno, after a delightful excursion of four hours, we proceeded on our journey, and soon entered the Val Vedro, through which runs a turbulent mountain-stream giving its name to the valley. Here we began to see the effects of the destructive storm of 1834 ; the road, in many places washed away, has not been reconstructed, and the broken bridges remain unrepaired. The valley was at times narrow, the hills which enclosed it varying in form and height ; on the pinnacles of some, houses and churches peeped forth from the surrounding trees ; here and there the higher rocks were clothed with the *tanne* or alpine fir, the hills covered with chestnut, walnut and mulberry trees, and the vines still hung in luxuriant festoons from tree to tree. We reached Domo d' Ossola at about seven o'clock.

Geneva, June 30th.

I HAVE waited a few days since our arrival in this city, before I completed my account of our journey

hither. This delay has arisen partly from fatigue, and partly from a reluctance I can scarcely conquer to speak of Italy for the last time. I will not however detain my letter longer, being anxious to send you the news of our having reached our summer-quarters in safety. The morning of the 24th broke in great beauty, and we left Domo d'Ossola with anticipations of the delight which the passage of the Semplon would afford. Soon after quitting the town, we crossed a deep chasm in the rocks by a fine bridge; the road then making a sharp turn, we soon reached the top of this lovely glen. Below us, the Vedro was dashing and foaming over the rocks that impeded its course, and making a thousand little waterfalls, which sparkled in the sunbeams. The bridge by which we had crossed this river was a noble object. Still further to the south we saw and bade farewell to the plains of Italy, and penetrating deeper and deeper into the mountains, after pursuing the valleys for some distance we began to ascend.

The snowy peaks, towering high above our heads and encompassing our path on every side, glittered brightly in the sun. Many beautiful cascades fell from rock to rock and joined the river, which foamed along the valley. One of these, the Frossinone, falling from an immense height, in a narrow part of the valley, seems as if it would

overwhelm the passer-by : at the entrance of the Grotto of Gondo is another cascade, the Zweichbergen. This is the longest of the grottos with which the road abounds ; they have been formed in those parts most liable to receive injury from the fall of avalanches.

At noon we reached the little mountain-village of the Semplon, where we stopped to dine. The day was one of exquisite beauty ; a warm and brilliant sun gladdened the whole scene, and banished that dreary desolation which many travellers describe in such vivid colours. Although we were now in the region of eternal snows, the ground was covered with lovely flowers ; the dark blue gentianella peeping through the snow, and the dwarf alpine plants were strewed about in wild profusion.

We had now gained the highest point, and soon passed the deserted Hospice, formerly occupied by a colony from the monastery of St. Bernard. The change in temperature had been so trifling, that I had not even put on the additional shawl with which I had provided myself. All trace of Italy was now lost : her sunny plains were exchanged for deep glens and barren defiles, and the woods of chestnut and mulberry-trees had given place to dark forests of mountain-pines. The contrast was very striking, and I felt that the

sublimity of Switzerland was still a thing of itself apart. In these mountain solitudes, where man sees around him the grandest forms of creation, the sternest aspects of nature, and seems raised, as it were more sensibly into the presence of the Almighty, the soul recognizes a deep and holy power which it experiences amid no other scenes.

In our descent, one of the hind wheels of the carriage was mounted on a wooden *sabot*, or shoe, of immense thickness, with which all prudent travellers provide themselves at the Semplon inn, and for the want of which we saw one carriage completely disabled and detained at Berisal, a wretched little village half way down the mountain. The friction caused by a rapid descent of these mountain-roads is so great, that when we stopped at the foot of the Semplon the enormous wooden shoe was worn to a mere shaving.

I have carried you quickly over the Semplon : this celebrated Alpine pass has been so often described by tourists, that I need not descant upon the beauties and grandeur of its scenery ; you must be content with a brief sketch of the remainder of our journey. We reached Brieg at about six o'clock—a pretty town, neat and cheerful, and truly Swiss in its character, with overhanging roofs and balconies : the primitive simplicity of the place delighted us. It was the

eve of the festival of Corpus Domini, and great bustle prevailed in the town; preparations were being made in the houses and churches, and we looked with peculiar interest on them as the last trace of Catholicism.

We accomplished the remainder of our journey in safety, and arrived at Geneva in four days from the time we had quitted Italy. The valley of the Rhone presents a succession of beautiful scenery: Sion, Martigny, and St. Maurice, might each claim a separate notice, but I must hasten to conclude.

If the letters I have written to you, my dear sister, during my wanderings in Italy have afforded you as much pleasure as I have felt in writing them, my satisfaction will be great: what is there sweeter than to impart and to receive knowledge, to make those we love sharers in happiness which it falls to our own lot to enjoy? I hope and believe that this mutual pleasure has been ours; and these letters, whilst they may have served to instruct and amuse you, will be to myself a record of recollections to which I shall hereafter recur with ever-fresh delight, and I hope with profit. Those who have enjoyed the privilege of visiting this classic land must have reaped small fruits from their tour, if the interest which it has excited is transient: Italy, with her varied and delightful memories of the past, and rich store

of natural beauties, offers an endless source of pleasure and instruction. I hope you will pursue the studies to which I have desired to introduce you, and that when I return to England, and to the enjoyment of a reunion with my dear family (the thought of which grows upon me as that happy time approaches), we may continue our journey together in this deeply interesting country. Remember, that in bidding adieu to Italy we have but crossed the threshold of her history, her literature and her art. Farewell!

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